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ABSTRACT

Noting that although the benefits of working closely with parents and families are widely recognized, many schools do not enjoy close partnerships with their communities, this document describes the Taking Stock program, which is intended to help develop more extensive, creative, and responsive strategies for collaboration. The goals of the program described are to: (1) present the elements of an effective parent, community, school partnership to improve student achievement; (2) enable a school to assess its current efforts to reach out and work with its community; (3) provide a user-friendly process to identify areas of strength and weakness; and (4) recommend how to use the findings to develop an action plan for improvement. Section 1 presents an overview of the entire process and recommends how to administer the Taking Stock inventory. Section 2 contains the questionnaires in English and Spanish for families, and in English for educators, while section 3 shows how to tally the survey, score and interpret findings, and report the results. Section 4 describes how to design, implement, and evaluate the action plan, and develop a district policy on family and community involvement. Section 5 contains an 86-item bibliography and a list of resources. (SM)

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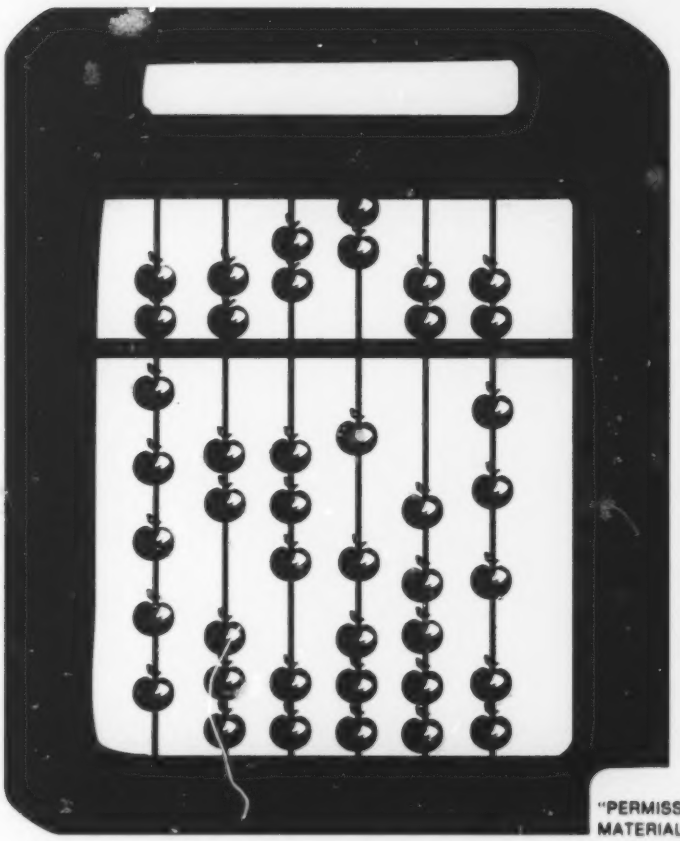
Taking Stock

The Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement



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Nancy Berla, Jocelyn Garlington and Anne T. Henderson

Taking Stock

The Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement

By

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In particular, we would like to thank Hayes Mizell of The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, for his help conceptualizing the notion of a "parent involvement audit," for sage advice both substantive and strategic, and for making financial support possible for development and field testing. We would also like to thank Pat Edwards of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, who secured additional support that made it possible to develop and field test the "community" element.

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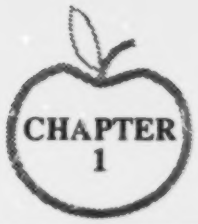
Report Sheets



What is Taking Stock?

Nearly everyone involved in public education now realizes that working more closely with parents and families is essential for improving not only student achievement but also the quality of education we offer in public schools. When parents are involved, their children do better in school *and* they go to better schools.

In *The Evidence Continues to Grow*, a book that reviews the research on the effects of parent involvement on student performance, the National Committee for Citizens in Education found these benefits:

- Higher grades and test scores
- Long-term improvement in academic achievement
- Positive attitudes and behavior
- More successful programs
- More effective schools.

This is particularly true for children we have chosen to label "at risk." Children tagged with this term are often from families with diverse cultural backgrounds, families who may not speak standard English well or be literate, families who may have little income and be underemployed, families who are of color and referred to as "minorities." When children are confronted at school with people who don't speak their language, who reward and punish very different behaviors, who do not look, act and dress like their families, they have difficulty connecting. As James Comer says, "children learn from people they bond to."

Schools can greatly ease this transition by working closely with the families of their students. Children need to know that their teachers and parents understand and respect each other, that they are communicating regularly, that they share similar goals and expectations. When this happens, children feel comfortable with who they are and can more easily integrate the disparate experiences of home and school.

The positive effects of collaboration do not run just one way. According to Joyce Epstein, a leading researcher in the field of parent and community involvement in public schools, teachers who work with parents tend to have higher expectations of their students, feel more support from the community, and have students who learn better. Teachers teach best the students they have gotten to know and care about. When families and schools work together, everyone wins.

Why an Inventory?

Even though these benefits are widely recognized, many local schools do not enjoy close partnerships with their communities. This distance is not necessarily the product of a deliberate decision, it has evolved as districts have consolidated and grown larger. At the same time that schools and their staffs have become ever more professional and specialized, families have been increasingly under siege. The social, economic, and demographic trends of the last thirty years have pulled communities apart, creating a gulf between families and schools, and disrupting the delicate network of connections essential to the common enterprise of raising children.

Rebuilding that network, enlivening those connections, resuming our common enterprise, take time and careful attention. For schools and communities who share tha commitment, *Taking Stock* provides a simple, practical tool to take a closer look at efforts to work together, and a set of resources to help develop more extensive, creative, and responsive strategies for collaboration. *Taking Stock* is a beginning, not an end. It is intended to:

- Introduce the components of an effective family-community-school partnership at both the elementary and secondary level
- Help a school to assess how well it is reaching out and working with its community
- Show how to use the results to develop a detailed action plan for improvement.

***Taking Stock* focuses on everyday policies and practices -- things that are well within a school's control.** These can either successfully engage families or effectively bar them from participation. *Taking Stock* is also designed to apply to all grade levels, from elementary through high school.

Section I, the "Introduction," presents an overview of the entire process and recommends how to administer the inventory. Section II contains the questionnaires for families (in English and Spanish) and educators. Section III shows how to tally the survey, score and interpret the findings, and report on the results; it also includes an example of a short report to the community. (Scoring can be done by hand, as described in Chapter 6, or by using the optional software package.) Section IV lays out how to design, implement and evaluate an action plan, and develop a district policy on family and community involvement. Section V contains a bibliography and a list of resources.

For easy reproduction, an extra set of the questionnaires and report forms, as well as masters for the transparencies to present *Taking Stock*, and a flyer to announce the first meeting, are included in the shrink-wrapped package tucked into the back cover pocket.

One of the most important parts of this manual is Chapter 10, "Moving Beyond Barriers: Steps to Success." Organized according to the twenty questions in the inventory, it gives detailed suggestions for everything from establishing effective, two-way communications to engaging more fathers and other men, from creating a successful parent resource room to developing a practical parent involvement policy, and from building a successful parent organization to working with churches and community organizations. Also included are helpful tips for working with African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American families, and suggestions for middle and high schools. For each question, there is also a short section on what parents can do to build collaborations.

Basic Elements of Partnership

Taking Stock is designed around five basic elements of partnership for improving student achievement. Each element is like the components of a house: walls, floor, roof, doors, and windows. If any one is missing, the structure is not complete. If all are present, the work of making a home can begin.

- **Reaching Out to Families:** What is the school doing to create effective two-way communications with families? How is the school extending itself to the community and inviting parents and citizens to share in the life of the school?

- **Welcoming Families to the School Building:** How does the school make family members feel comfortable when they come to school? What is being done to show parents that they really belong there?

- **Developing a Strong Relationship Between Families and the School:** What is the school doing to build trust and collaboration among parents, teachers, other staff, and administrators? In what ways are they working together to improve student achievement?

- **Helping Parents Understand the School Curriculum:** What information do families receive about the school's educational program and what is taught in each grade? How are parents involved in setting goals for student achievement and in evaluating their progress?

- **Helping Parents Be More Effective as Parents and as Community Members:** Does the school collaborate with families to provide a parent education program? How does the school help provide connections to community services and organizations?

These elements are covered in the core of *Taking Stock*, which consists of the two questionnaires (one for families, the second for educators). Each contains twenty questions, plus a short series of open-ended questions at the end ("The Last Word"). Although the same questions are asked of each group, the wording of the questions for families is more personal, as you can see in the example below.

For Families:

16. Does the school explain what your child is learning and how he or she is being taught?

For example:

a. Does the school offer materials explaining the curriculum grade by grade? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school provide parent orientation about educational programs (Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education, for example?) ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do you understand your child's placement? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's success in helping you understand the curriculum:
○ *Excellent* ○ *Good* ○ *Fair* ○ *Poor*

For Educators:

16. Does the school give parents adequate information about the curriculum?

For example:

a. School offers written materials to explain the curriculum ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Orientation is provided for parents about school's educational programs ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Parents are consulted about child's placement (e.g. Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's information on the curriculum:
○ *Excellent* ○ *Good* ○ *Fair* ○ *Poor*

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Each question has three parts. The question itself, in bold type, poses a general inquiry about the school. Next, the three or four examples, also in question format, illustrate what the main question means. These examples help the respondent understand how schools can carry out the task identified by the question, and set a standard by which the school's performance can be judged. Finally, the rating scale asks the respondent to appraise the school's performance from "excellent" to "poor." The responses to the rating scale are the most important for scoring, but the checks placed beside the examples will also provide guidance in developing the Action Plan.

This is a general instrument designed to cover a wide variety of local school settings, from diverse inner cities to homogeneous rural communities. Some of the questions may, therefore, seem less applicable than others to your own local situations. If, for example, there are no Spanish-speaking families in your community, it is not necessary to have interpreters at PTA/PTO meetings or Spanish report cards. Every school community has its own forms of diversity, however, whether they are variations in family incomes or educational levels, family structure or religion. Remember that the examples given under each question are examples only; your school may well have developed its own, equally appropriate responses, to its own form of diversity. Please keep this in mind and respond to all the questions according to your own good judgment.

What Do We Mean by "Parents?"

It may appear that the terms "parents" and "families" are used interchangeably. In a way, they are. By "parents" we mean those people who have legal, or quasi-legal, custody of children, whether they are biological, adoptive, foster, or *de facto* parents of the child attending school. For many children, their grandparents, older brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, and other relatives or close friends may play a parental role; these people serve as their extended family. To make it clear that the school should work with all members of the family who are important to their students, we tend to use "family" where all such people should be included, and "parent" when we mean those acting specifically in a parental role.

Lessons from Field Testing

To make sure that the questions asked in *Taking Stock* are both clear and relevant, and that the scoring process works properly, the National Committee for Citizens in Education conducted several field tests at both elementary and secondary schools. After each round of testing, the questionnaires and scoring process were revised and refined.

Some of the lessons we learned are worth repeating here. At the first field test site, two inner-city middle schools in Baltimore, we used the same questionnaire for families and educators (we chose the more impersonal educator version). The occasion was report card pick-up day. As parents came into the building, they were invited to stop by the library to fill out a short survey about how well the school was working with families. The invitation promised refreshments and a door prize.

The initial response was excellent. Nearly seventy-five parents at each school took the trouble to walk to the library and to stay at least fifteen minutes while looking over the survey. When they came in, they were greeted by volunteers many of them knew, and offered a soft drink and cookies or pretzels, before being handed a questionnaire and a pencil. Volunteers circulated around the tables, explaining the purpose of the survey and answering questions. What is wrong with this picture?

Imagine the event from the parents' point of view. As you come into the building, nicely dressed staff members and volunteers, wearing high-heeled shoes or coats and ties, invite you to the library. Curious, but feeling scruffy in your casual clothes and sneakers, you confer with a couple of friends and decide to check it out. In the library, more nicely dressed people greet you and offer some treats. Well alright, you take the questionnaire and pencil, sit down, and look around. Surrounding you are people quietly reading and filling out blanks with their pencils. What does this feel like? A TEST.

What happened? More than half the parents left without completing the questionnaire; many wrote a simple "don't know" in the margins. Often parents marked "yes" or "excellent" by questions about activities where the school was, in fact, doing nothing. One school's PTA/PTO earned a low B on the questionnaire rating scale, yet the school doesn't even have a parent-teacher organization.

From our conversations, we discovered that parents thought we wanted to find out how much they *knew* about the school, rather than how they felt about it. Although the parents were assembled to take the survey, small groups came and went throughout the day, and there was no opportunity for them to hear together what *Taking Stock* is all about, and to ask questions as a group.

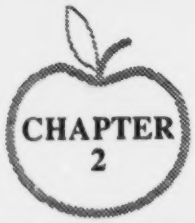
Consequently, we created two questionnaires, with the parent version worded much more personally. "Does the school communicate often and openly with you," for example, rather than "Does the school communicate often and openly with parents?" We also strongly recommend that parents be gathered in a setting that allows easy exchange of ideas and group interaction.

At another site, an elementary school in an older, first-ring suburb of a midwestern city, we relied on the PTA to pull together a representative sample of parents. The sample was representative, but only of the established PTA leadership, which gave the school (and the parent organization) straight-A's. From the teacher responses, on the other hand, we had a rich and often critical view of the school, because 95 percent of the staff participated; but we had no way to compare these reliably with parent opinion. Half the picture was missing.

At first, we did not include any open-ended questions, for fear that parents might be put off by being asked to write. Parents of low literacy or limited-English proficiency can feel intimidated by settings that reveal this weakness. Yet in Milwaukee and Oakland, when we added "The Last Word," low-income, middle school parents seemed delighted at the additional opportunity to express themselves. The one-page format encouraged simple phrases; no one felt obligated to write long essays. Their responses were very informative and revealing.

Everywhere we tested, families tended to give the schools higher marks than the educators did. Parents are reluctant to speak ill of their children's school and have great respect for the people who work there. Teachers, on the other hand, do not hesitate to be critical. For this reason, it is important to look at relative ratings carefully -- which areas receive the lowest marks, for example, and how these compare with the other group's rankings. Information about the curriculum and educational program may rate a B- from parents and a C- from educators, an apparent difference. But that same question might be the lowest-rated one in both groups.

In short, we learned that participants must be put at ease, that the whole school community must be represented, that the meetings need to be run by someone they know, trust and feel comfortable with. Above all, everyone participating must understand that the results will not be used against them or the school.



How Does it Work?

The process of *Taking Stock* falls into three stages:

1. Introducing *Taking Stock*, interpreting the results, and reporting to the school community.
2. Developing an Action Plan
3. Implementing the Action Plan.

Many schools already have a school improvement mechanism or process which can incorporate *Taking Stock*. Where this is not the case, we recommend a process described in some detail in Chapters 7 through 9. To help a school or district visualize what a complete and thorough process might look like, we have presented a fairly comprehensive and ambitious approach, in order to accommodate varying levels of commitment and resources. Obviously, not all school communities will be able to operate on this scale.

We do realize that you have other responsibilities than to assure strong parent involvement.

Taking Stock is designed so that each school community can adapt the process to its own circumstances. Whatever the size or the composition of the team that will conduct *Taking Stock*, we strongly encourage a commitment to all three stages.

For each stage, we recommend forming a team, composed of the principal (or administrator designated by the principal), parent leaders, representatives of teachers and other staff, student representatives (as appropriate), and community leadership. The selection process should be compatible with local custom (unless the tradition is by principal decree). In most cases, the people who are interested come forward to serve. This group then reaches out to recruit others needed to make the team more representative of the entire school community.

As outlined in the chart on the next page, the team expands as the stages progress, from a small Survey Team, to a medium-sized Action Team, to a more comprehensive Family and Community Involvement Task Force.

Who Can Initiate *Taking Stock?*

The initial leadership for *Taking Stock* can come from any sector of the local school community: the parent organization, a community group, the teachers' association, the principal or another administrator, a curriculum or guidance consultant, the school social worker, the student council. Far more important than who initiated the process is how many others buy into the idea. It is not possible to succeed with *Taking Stock* when the major constituencies of the school community -- families, teachers, administrators, other staff -- do not wish to cooperate.

If the principal wants to show teachers that they are doing a lousy job of working with parents, or the PTA/PTO president wants to dig up dirt on the principal, or the teachers want to demonstrate that parents don't care about the school, the collaborative, trust-building spirit of *Taking Stock* will be violated. *Taking Stock* is designed to bring people together, not to divide them.

Overview of the *Taking Stock* Process

Stage I: Introducing *Taking Stock*, Interpreting Results & Reporting to Community
(3-6 weeks)

1. Select Survey Team
(5-10 people)

- Principal
- Parents
- Teachers
- Other staff
- Students

2. Present *Taking Stock* to the Community:

Publicize *Taking Stock*
Hold gatherings for families and educators
- Explain Taking Stock
- Answer questions
- Give survey
- Hold discussion

3. Interpret and Report on the Results

Tally surveys
Compile "Last Words"
Score and interpret findings
Draft and present a short report to school community

Stage 2: Developing an Action Plan
(4-6 weeks)

4. Select Action Team
(15-20 people)

- Principal/administrator
- Parents
- Teachers
- Other staff
- Students
- Community representatives

5. Develop Draft Action Plan

Review findings and report
Set priorities (Chapter 8)
Consult:
- Steps to Success
- Troubleshooting
- On Balance
- Parents in Action

Draft Action Plan for each priority

6. Obtain Approval of Action Plan

Circulate Action Plan draft:
- Parent groups
- Teachers association/union
- School staff
- Community groups
- District staff

Finalize Action Plan
Publicize Action Plan

Stage 3: Implementing the Action Plan
(1-2 years)

7. Select Family-School Partnership Task Force:

- Principal/administrator
- Parent representatives/parents
- Teacher respresentatives/teachers
- Community representatives/local citizens and community groups

8. Form Subcommittees

Assign tasks
Set timelines
Meet/discuss progress
Report to Task Force

9. Evaluate Progress and Revise Action Plan

Report to:
- Parent groups
- School staff
- Community groups
- District staff
- School board
- The public

10. Re-do *Taking Stock*

Even when the idea originates at the district level, it is crucial that the process still belong to the local school community. A superintendent or school board with a high priority of improving community-school relations, for example, could inform schools about *Taking Stock* and offer to make it available to interested schools. The results should be shared with the district and with other schools *only* if the participating schools freely agree. *Taking Stock* is *not* designed to make school-by-school comparisons or to show which schools are doing a "poor" versus a "good" job of working with parents. It is an assessment tool for self-evaluation and action planning.

If used by most or all schools in a district, however, *Taking Stock* can provide useful information for district staff. The data will give an overall picture of the health of home-school collaboration in the district and will help to pinpoint particular problems which need to be addressed by district action and support. For example, *Taking Stock* could reveal that schools serving low-income areas need assistance in identifying community resources for families, or that local parent-teacher organizations would benefit from a district council, or that the district should develop easy-to-understand materials for parents on the middle school math and science curricula. Children do better when adults join hands, not point fingers.

Administering the Inventory

Once the Survey Team is assembled, its first task is to introduce *Taking Stock* to the school community in such a way as to build collaboration and avoid the pitfalls described in the section on field testing. One way to do this is to select two or three facilitators, preferably members of the Survey Team, and people with whom parents and school staff will feel comfortable. The facilitators' chief assignment will be to lead the meetings for parents and educators where *Taking Stock* is presented and the questionnaires are filled out. Because the facilitators will be highly influential in setting the mood for the *Taking Stock* process, they will need to be knowledgeable about the process and the questionnaires in order to answer important questions about its purpose, outcomes, and next steps.

The facilitators should make a special effort to reassure the participants that *Taking Stock* is not an "evaluation" of parent involvement at the school. Nor is it just another survey that will be forgotten as soon as it is taken. Both educators and parents may wonder whether this process will actually improve the daily educational life of the school. And there are those who will have concerns about the origin of *Taking Stock* and whether the findings will be made available.

Participants also need to be assured that answering the questionnaire frankly will not result in mandates from authorities outside the school, and that completing the questionnaire is but one aspect of a process that will strengthen parent involvement activity on a variety of levels. Explain that *Taking Stock* will result in an Action Plan developed by the school community to improve the quality of education for its young people through family/school/community collaboration, a plan that is responsive to the particular needs and priorities of those who are directly affected. All those involved should have a voice and a role in shaping the outcomes; filling out the questionnaire is the first step in ensuring that those voices are heard.

> **Tip:** To keep easy track of the two questionnaires, copy the family questionnaire in a bright color. Better yet, copy them both in two different, bright colors.

Duties of the Facilitators

- **Introduce *Taking Stock*.** Explain why the school community decided to proceed with *Taking Stock*, how the process will work, and what the final product (that is, the Action Plan) will achieve. Be as specific as possible about when the results will be ready and how they will be reported to the community. Answer questions.

- **Explain how the questions are designed.** Convey the importance of each question and emphasize that no question should be skipped. **All questionnaires with two or more questions left blank cannot be used, because they will bias the scoring.** Pay special attention to the section where respondents are asked to rate the school (the shaded box at the end of each section).

- **Distribute the questionnaire.** Each person should receive *one* copy. Note that the questionnaire does not need to be signed; all responses will be kept confidential.

- **Monitor the filling out of the survey.** So that the community can know who participated, it is important that the appropriate box describing the respondent's staff position or relationship to a student is checked. Circulate around the room as people are filling them out, and offer help if someone seems to be having difficulty.

- **Pass out handouts.** Easy-to-read information explaining *Taking Stock* is always helpful. Ask for comments and questions.

- **Set a date for the next meeting.** This will reassure everyone that their continuing involvement is valued and that they will learn about the results of the inventory.

At the end of this chapter is a sheet of suggested talking points for facilitators, as well as copy for transparencies explaining *Taking Stock* that could be shown through an overhead projector. Masters for the transparencies and a handout explaining *Taking Stock* are included in the shrink-wrapped package tucked in the back pocket of this notebook.

Special Tips for Putting Parents At Ease

It is especially important to maintain a cordial, non-intimidating atmosphere. Parents need to know that *Taking Stock* is not a test and that there are no right or wrong answers. The facilitator should also assure parents and other family members that their answers are strictly confidential and that there will be no punitive consequences. Assure parents that it can take as little as fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire; however, they may take as much time as they need. If they have questions, they should feel free to ask the facilitator at any time.

The family questionnaire differs slightly from the educator version. Explain to parents that this questionnaire is designed to get to the heart of their feelings about their child's school and their opportunities for access. It is not designed to measure or evaluate levels of individual parent participation, nor to judge parents in any way. **The purpose of *Taking Stock* is to discover what parents want and need in order to become more involved and better connected with their child's school.** *Taking Stock* will provide the information needed to help the school staff become better listeners and reactors to parents and community.

The facilitator should keep in mind that:

- Some parents will be apprehensive, despite reassurances, and may have lots of questions. Be patient and make yourself available after the session to discuss *Taking Stock*, if needed.

- A sample page of the parent questionnaire should be projected during the time parents are answering the questions. Offer to guide the group orally through the questions, projecting each page of the questionnaire, if it really seems necessary. (Some parents may find this distracting.) Encourage parents to be straightforward about how much assistance they will need.

Some parents may have trouble with some of the questions, but will be uncomfortable asking for help. Be a careful observer and offer assistance in a non-intrusive way. You may want to offer to read the questionnaire out loud in a separate setting. Help parents overcome their embarrassment by explaining that surveys are often offered orally because some people find the print too small or the survey layout confusing. If necessary, offer to let parents complete the survey by telephone.

Tips for Success

Offer refreshments and door prizes; state this on the invitation. You may want to have a door prize for children as well. Ask parents to bring their friends to the meeting.

- Use a friendly, brightly lit room. If the room looks bare, hang some children's artwork. You may want to solicit the help of students to liven up the atmosphere.

- Greet parents personally at the door and steer them to the refreshment table. Again, students make great assistants. Students can help serve refreshments, pass out, collect and count surveys, direct and welcome parents. The warmer the initial reception, the more at ease everyone will feel with the process.

- Use name tags to identify the hosts (for example, Ms. Jones, 4th grade teacher; Mr. Gonzales, parent volunteer; Kelly Wilson, student).

- If the group is small enough, it might help to warm up the atmosphere if parents introduce themselves to each other.

- Convey to the group that there will be follow-up and that their continued participation is essential. Have a sign-in sheet to collect current addresses and phone numbers. Explain why this information is needed.

- Parents should be polled for the best time to meet with them to discuss the results. Offer to mail results and talk by phone if attending a follow-up session is not feasible.

What is a Representative Sample?

The Survey Team must also ensure that a representative sample both of families and educators participates in the process. The simplest way to obtain a complete response from school staff is to make *Taking Stock* the topic of a faculty and staff meeting. If eighty to ninety percent of the staff responds, their opinions should be fully and fairly covered.

The question of reaching the proper proportion of families is more complex. Most schools have several neighborhoods in their attendance area; these may vary greatly in their economic, social, cultural, and racial diversity. We recommend two separate criteria for "representative":

1. Try to have at least 25% of the school's families fill out questionnaires.

2. These participants should represent all the various groups in the school community. If 30% of the families are African-American and 20% Hispanic, then approximately the same proportion should participate. If 20% fall below the poverty line, 35% are blue-collar; and 45% are middle class, these proportions should also be respected.

It will probably take several gatherings to reach a representative group of families. Consider holding at least one gathering in each feeder area or neighborhood in the school's attendance zone. Ask parents to invite other parents to their homes to fill out questionnaires; ask local community groups or churches to sponsor gatherings on *Taking Stock*.

Getting a representative sample is especially important if students are bussed from all over the district, or when the neighborhoods are very different.

Tip: To assure adequate diversity, add a line to the front page of the questionnaire asking participants to write down the name of the neighborhood in which they live.

In a community with much social division, tallying the questionnaires from the different neighborhoods separately may be very revealing. Variations in the responses can help the school develop more appropriate strategies and outreach. One neighborhood might be more concerned with the school's response to single and working parent families, while another may place top priority on connections to community services.

If the response is still too low after several attempts at meetings or gatherings, consider making home visits to the least- represented families. Another strategy might be to mail questionnaires to selected families, and follow these with a phone call. If they seem reluctant to respond, take their responses over the telephone. Remember that the results of *Taking Stock* are only as valid as the sample they are drawn from. A bit of extra effort here may assure the success of the entire process.

Introducing Taking Stock:

Talking Points for Facilitators

Show transparency #1: "*Taking Stock*: What's Involved?"

Key point to make:

- Thank everyone for coming. We appreciate that you all have busy schedules and appreciate the time and thought you are giving this.
- Your participation will shape future parent involvement efforts. You may choose to limit your participation to filling out this questionnaire or you may want to become a part of the action planning team.
- The purpose of *Taking Stock* is not to evaluate or make judgments. It is designed to open up discussion and develop a doable plan for more effective ways to connect families and community with the school.

Show transparency #2: "Goals of *Taking Stock*"

Key points to make:

- Your answers are confidential. Information stays in the school community. There are no outside assessors. The survey results do not disappear; they become the foundation of an action plan.
- *Taking Stock* is not a test of your knowledge about your school and there are no wrong or right answers. It is a way of looking at the school's relationship with families and how to create opportunities for communication and collaborative efforts.
- Please do not sign the questionnaire. All we need to know is your role in the school community.

Show transparency #3: "Sample questions"

Key points to make:

- Questions for parents and educators are essentially the same. Parents, your questions are worded to evoke responses based on your personal experience and perceptions.
- Educators, your questions address the same issues, but are worded in a slightly different way because of your knowledge of school practices and professional responsibilities in the area of parent involvement.

- Each question has there parts. The basic question, in bold, is at the top. Next, three or four examples illustrate what the question means. Then the shaded box asks you to rate the school's performance.

- This survey asks that you "rate" the school's performance in reaching out to families. Your "rating" is what counts in the scoring process. **Please make sure you check the rating box for each question.**

- Please answer *all* questions. We can't use any questionnaires with more than two questions left blank.

- *The Last Word* questions give you an opportunity to express in more detail ways the school can be more responsive to families and community. These are optional but your views will be very helpful.

Show transparency #4: "The Family Report Card"

Key points to make:

- Parents and school staff will receive the results of the survey. The report card for families and educators provides an at-a-glance format for interpreting the results. This is an important step in identifying priority areas for action.

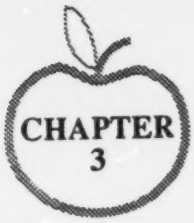
- You will be invited to a follow-up meeting to discuss the results. If you are unable to attend this meeting, let us know and we will make other arrangements to ensure that you get an explanation of the results.

- If you have any questions about the survey, please do not hesitate to ask. Survey formats, no matter how carefully designed, can be confusing and sometimes unclear.

- It should take you only fifteen or twenty minutes to complete the survey, but please take as much time as you need.

- Keep in mind this survey is just the beginning. *Taking Stock* is a process for change. We hope you are as excited as we are!

NOTE: Reproducible transparency masters are included in the shrink-wrapped package tucked into the binder sleeve of this notebook.



Taking Stock / for Families

The Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement

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Dear Parents and Family Members:

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to answer these questions about your school's efforts to work with families. Research shows that involving parents helps children do better in school.

Your answers will help the school learn more about your dreams and expectations for your children. With your help, the school can plan a parent involvement program that meets your needs and contributes to your child's success.

We greatly value your responses.

****

1. Name of School: _____

2. Date: _____

3. Please let us know who you are:

   - ❑ Parent
   - ❑ Grandparent or Relative
   - ❑ Friend

All responses will be kept confidential

1. Does the school communicate often and openly with you?

For example:

a. Does the school keep you informed about important dates, activities, and events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are communications from the school easy to understand? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school handbook provide useful information for parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Has the school encouraged you to review your child's records? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Overall, rate the school's communications with parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

2. Does the school respect and respond to its community's cultural and language differences?

For example:

a. Are report cards and newsletters available in a language you understand? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school reception staff communicate well with you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Is information about school events available in your neighborhood, such as at local churches and over the radio? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's response to its community:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

3. If you are a single or working parent, do you feel the school makes a special effort to reach you?

For example:

a. Are meetings and events held evenings and/or weekends to fit your schedule? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Is child care provided during meetings and at other school events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school make efforts to reach you at work or in the evening? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's efforts to reach out to single and working parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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4. Does the school make extra efforts to reach all families?

For example:

a. Have you been invited to school gatherings at places in the community, such as local churches or community centers? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are special efforts made to involve fathers and other men important to your children? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Have you ever been asked for advice or help in reaching other parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Have you been introduced to a school staff person whose job is getting to know your community? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's extra efforts to reach families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

5. Does the school welcome you into the building and make you feel comfortable?

For example:

a. Are directions clearly posted to help you find your way around? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school have a parent room or center? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Is the office waiting area comfortable? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Is the office staff friendly and helpful? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's welcome to families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

6. Are the school and its staff open and available to you?

For example:

a. Are you welcome in the building any time during the school day? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school return your calls within 24 hours? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. May you easily visit or observe the classroom? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's openness to you:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

7. Does the school encourage your volunteer participation?

For example:

a. Are there interesting volunteer opportunities you can do at school or at home? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Have you been encouraged to volunteer? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school appreciate your volunteer efforts? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's volunteer program:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

8. Is the parent-teacher organization (PTA/PTO) active and strong?

For example:

a. Does the PTA/PTO meet at least four times a year? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Do you enjoy attending the meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do your child's teachers attend the meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Do parents elect PTA/PTO officers? ❑ Yes ❑ No

e. Are you given time to express your opinions at meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's PTA/PTO:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

9. What are the PTA/PTO's major activities?

For example:

a. Recruiting new members? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Sponsoring school social events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Discussing controversial issues (for example, parents' rights, sex education)? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Reviewing the school's academic performance? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the PTA/PTO's activities:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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10. Does the school reach out to your community?

For example:

a. Does the school work with community groups to provide extra services for families, such as tutoring, rent assistance, or housing? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school participate in community events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Have you heard about any partnerships the school has with local businesses? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's outreach to the community:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

11. Do your children's teachers work closely with you?

For example:

a. Do teachers tell you how to contact them? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Do you hear from your child's teachers at least once a month? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Are you notified right away if your child falls behind? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Are you involved in solving discipline problems? ❑ Yes ❑ No

e. Do teachers suggest home learning activities for you to use with your child? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the teachers' efforts to communicate with parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

12. Does the school provide opportunities for you and your child's teacher to develop a strong partnership?

For example:

a. Does the school sponsor social events for parents and teachers to get to know each other? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Have you been notified of workshops on how parents and teachers can work better together? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Are you ever invited to school staff meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's parent-teacher partnership opportunities:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

13. Does the principal make an effort to know parents and students?

For example:

a. Is the principal friendly and polite to you and other parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Is the principal available to meet with parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the principal attend most school events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Does the principal know who your child is? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the principal's availability:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

14. Do you feel that parents are involved in decision-making at the school?

For example:

a. Are parents included in selecting the school principal? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are parents involved in planning and evaluating school programs? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school actively seek advice from parents on school issues? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate parent involvement in decision-making:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

15. Is the school's parent involvement policy clear to you?

For example:

a. Is the policy in writing? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Is the policy included in the school handbook? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do you have a copy of the policy? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's parent involvement policy:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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16. Does the school explain what your child is learning and how he or she is being taught?

For example:

a. Does the school offer materials explaining the curriculum grade by grade? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school provide parent orientation about educational programs (Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education, for example)? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do you understand your child's placement? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's success in helping you understand the curriculum:
O Excellent O Good O Fair O Poor

17. Does the school fully inform parents about its goals for student achievement?

For example:

a. Have you been informed of the school's goals for student achievement? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Were parents involved in setting these goals? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school explain whether students are grouped by ability? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate how well the school communicates its goals:
O Excellent O Good O Fair O Poor

18. Do you feel fully informed about your child's academic performance?

For example:

a. Are report card and grades fully explained to you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Do you have an opportunity to discuss how to improve your child's performance privately with teachers? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Are results of standardized tests, for your child and the whole class, clearly explained to you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate how well the school keeps you informed about your child's performance:
O Excellent O Good O Fair O Poor

19. Does the school help you be more effective as parents?

For example:

a. Does the school involve you in planning activities for families? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school offer workshops on how you can help your child do better in school? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school help organize events for parents to get to know each other? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Does the school bring in community groups or agencies to provide training on topics of interest to you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's performance in supporting you as a parent:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

20. Are community services offered through the school?

For example:

a. Does the school offer adult education and high school equivalency (GED) programs? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are social services available through the school (for example, health services, family counseling)? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Is the school building available for community activities? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's community services:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

P.S. Please make sure that you have checked "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," or "Poor" for <u>every</u> question. Thank you.

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TAKING STOCK

The Last Word / For Families

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to our questionnaire. We are also interested in hearing what YOU would like to say about involving families in your school.

1. What is the school doing that is most helpful to you as a parent?

2. Please tell us about what you WISH the school would do to make things easier for you and your child.

3. What do you think would be the best ways for parents at your school to become more involved?

4. Do you feel welcome and comfortable in the school? Why?

TAKING STOCK is a user-friendly process for looking at how the school is working with its families and community, and how they can work together better to support student success. TAKING STOCK is a project of the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE). Copyright 1993 National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Haciendo un Balance / Para Familias

Inventario del Apoyo de la Familia, la Comunidad y la Escuela para el Éxito Académico de los Estudiantes

****

Estimados padres:

Gracias por dedicar parte de su tiempo para contestar este cuestionario sobre los esfuerzos que la escuela hace para trabajar con ustedes. Estudios hechos han demostrado que a los niños les va mejor en la escuela cuando sus padres participan en su educación.

Sus respuestas ayudarán a la escuela a conocer mejor sus necesidades, anhelos y las aspiraciones que usted tiene para sus hijos. Con su ayuda, la escuela puede preparar un programa de participación de padres que responda a sus necesidades y que contribuya al triunfo de sus hijos.

Sus respuestas son de gran valor para nosotros.

****

1. Nombre de la escuela: _____
2. Fecha: _____
3. Cuál es su relación con el estudiante que asiste a esta escuela:

   ❑ padre / madre

   ❑ abuelo / abuela / otro familiar

   ❑ amigo / amiga

Sus respuestas son confidenciales

1. ¿Se comunica la escuela con usted a menudo y de manera franca?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le mantiene la escuela informado de las fechas, actividades y eventos importantes? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Son fáciles de entender los comunicados de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Provee el manual de la escuela información útil para los padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿Le ha motivado la escuela para que revise los expedientes de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

En general, califique la comunicación de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

2. ¿Respeta y responde la escuela a las diferencias culturales y de idioma en su comunidad?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Están disponibles en español las tarjetas de calificaciones y los boletines de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se comunican bien los empleados de la oficina con usted? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Se ofrece en su vecindario, la iglesia o por la radio información acerca de los eventos de la escuela? ❑Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo que la escuela hace para alcanzar a todas las familias:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

3. Sí usted es un padre o una madre que trabaja o encabeza su hogar solo(a), ¿cree que la escuela se esfuerza por comunicarse con usted?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se llevan a cabo las reuniones y otros eventos de la escuela por la noche o los fines de semana para permitir su participación? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se ofrece cuidado de niños durante las reuniones u otras actividades de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Se esfuerza la escuela por comunicarse con usted a una hora conveniente? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo que hace la escuela para comunicarse con familias donde ambos padres trabajan o donde sólo hay un padre:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

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4. ¿Hace la escuela un esfuerzo por estar en contacto con todas las familias?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le han invitado a reuniones de la escuela en otros lugares de su comunidad, como iglesias locales o centros comunales? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Hace la escuela esfuerzos especiales para incluir a los papás u otros hombres importantes en la vida de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Le han pedido a usted consejos o ayuda para hacer contacto con otros padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Le han presentado a usted a alguien de la escuela cuyo trabajo es mejorar los lazos con la comunidad? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo adicional de la escuela para alcanzar a todas las familias:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

5. ¿Se siente usted bienvenido y lo hacen sentirse cómodo en la escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Hay señales claras que le ayudan a orientarse dentro de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Tiene la escuela un salón o centro para padres de familia? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Es cómoda el área de espera de la oficina? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Son los empleados de la oficina amables y serviciales? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo que hace la escuela para que los padres se sientan bienvenidos y apreciados:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

6. ¿Se siente usted bien recibido en la escuela y están los empleados dispuestos a ayudarle?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Permite la escuela su visita a cualquier hora del día? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Contesta la escuela sus recados sin atrasos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿ Le facilita la escuela visitar u observar en el aula de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique la atención que usted recibe de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

7. ¿Le motiva a usted la escuela para que preste servicios voluntarios?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Hay oportunidades interesantes para ayudar en la escuela o desde su casa? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Le han pedido a usted prestar servicio voluntario? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Agradece la escuela sus esfuerzos voluntarios? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el programa voluntario de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

8. ¿Qué tan activo es el grupo de padres (PTA/PTO) de su escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se reúne el grupo por lo menos cuatro veces al año? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Le gusta a usted ir a las reuniones? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Asísten a estas reuniones los maestros de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿Eligen los padres de familia la directiva del grupo? ❑ Sí ❑ No

e. ¿Tiene usted oportunidad en las reuniones de expresar sus opiniones e ideas? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el grupo de padres (PTA/PTO):
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

9. ¿Cuáles son las principales actividades del grupo de padres (PTA/PTO)?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Atraer miembros nuevos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Patrocinar eventos sociales para la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Discutir temas controversiales; por ejemplo, derechos de los padres y educación sexual? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Revisar los resultados académicos de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique las actividades del grupo de padres (PTA/PTO):
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

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10. ¿Está su escuela en contacto con la comunidad?

Por ejemplo:

a. Trabaja la escuela con grupos de la comunidad para ofrecer servicios adicionales a las familias, tales como tutoría o asistencia para vivienda? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Participa la escuela en eventos de la comunidad? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Sabe usted de proyectos de colaboración entre la escuela y negocios locales? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique cómo son las relaciones de la escuela con la comunidad:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

11. ¿Trabajan los maestros de sus hijos en estrecha colaboración con usted?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le dicen los maestros cómo comunicarse con ellos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se comunican con usted los maestros de sus hijos por lo menos una vez al mes? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Le avisa la escuela inmediatamente si sus hijos se atrasan en los estudios? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿Ayuda usted a resolver los problemas de disciplina de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

e. ¿Sugieren los maestros actividades de aprendizaje para que usted las use en la casa con sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique los esfuerzos de los maestros:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenos*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

12. ¿Ofrece la escuela oportunidades para que usted desarrolle una relación estrecha con los maestros de sus hijos?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Patrocina la escuela actividades sociales para que los padres de familia y los maestros se conozcan mejor? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Le han avisado a usted de talleres de entrenamiento que se llevan a cabo para conocer formas en que los padres pueden trabajar mejor con los maestros? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Ha sido usted invitado a reuniones del personal de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique las oportunidades que la escuela ofrece para que usted desarrolle una relación estrecha con ella:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

13. ¿Hace el director (principal) un esfuerzo por llegar a conocer a los padres y a los estudiantes?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Es el director amistoso y amable con usted y otros padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Está el director a la dispocisión para reunirse con los padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Participa el director en la mayoría de las actividades de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Conoce el director a sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique la disponibilidad del director:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

14. ¿Cree usted que los padres participan en la toma de decisiones de la escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Participan los padres en la selección del director? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Participan los padres en actividades para diseñar y evaluar programas para la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Busca la escuela activamente sugerencias de los padres sobre asuntos relacionados con la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique la participación de los padres en la toma de decisiones de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

15. ¿Está clara para usted la política de la escuela en cuanto a la participación de los padres?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Tiene la escuela esta política por escrito? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Están estas políticas incluídas en el manual de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Tiene usted una copia de estas políticas? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique las políticas de la escuela sobre la participación de los padres:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

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16. ¿Le explica a usted la escuela lo que sus hijos estudian y cómo se les está enseñando?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Ofrece la escuela materiales que explican el plan de estudio para cada grado? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Ofrece la escuela información sobre los diferentes programas educativos, por ejemplo, educación especial, *Capítulo 1*, educación bilingüe? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Entiende usted la ubicación académica de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el éxito de la escuela en ayudarle a entender el plan de estudio:
❍ ***excelente*** ❍ ***bueno*** ❍ ***regular*** ❍ ***deficiente***

17. ¿Ofrece la escuela suficiente información sobre sus metas para el logro académico de sus estudiantes?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se le ha informado a usted sobre las metas de la escuela para el logro académico de los estudiantes? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Participaron los padres de familia en establecer estas metas? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Revisa la escuela estas metas con los padres todos los años? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique que tan bien la escuela da a conocer sus metas académicas:
❍ ***excelente*** ❍ ***bien*** ❍ ***regular*** ❍ ***deficiente***

18. ¿Se siente usted bien informado sobre el rendimiento académico de sus hijos?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se asegura la escuela de que usted entienda las tarjetas de calificaciones y las notas de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se le da a usted la oportunidad de hablar en privado con los maestros sobre cómo mejorar el rendimiento escolar de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Explica la escuela, con claridad, los resultados de las pruebas estandarizadas de sus hijos y de la clase en general? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique que tan bien la escuela le mantiene informado sobre el rendimiento escolar de sus hijos:
❍ ***excelente*** ❍ ***bien*** ❍ ***regular*** ❍ ***deficiente***

19. ¿Le ofrece la escuela apoyo como padre de familia?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le ofrece la escuela la oportunidad de planear actividades para la familia? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Ofrece la escuela talleres de entrenamiento en cómo ayudar a sus hijos con los estudios? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Ayuda la escuela a organizar actividades para que los padres se conozcan mejor entre sí? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Usa la escuela a otros grupos o agencias de la comunidad para ofrecerle información sobre temas de su interés? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el apoyo que usted como padre recibe de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

20. ¿Se ofrecen servicios comunitarios a través de la escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Existen en la escuela programas de educación para adultos y de equivalencia de estudios secundarios (GED)? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se ofrecen servicios sociales a través de la escuela; por ejemplo, servicios de salud y consejería familiar? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Presta la escuela sus instalaciones para actividades de la comunidad? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique los servicios comunitarios que ofrece la escuela:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenos*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

P.S. Por favor asegúrese de haber marcado en cada pregunta la sección de "excelente", "bueno", "regular" o " deficiente". Gracias.

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HACIENDO UN BALANCE

Preguntas Abiertas / Para Familias

Queremos agradecerle mucho el tiempo que usted dedicó para responder este cuestionario. También estamos interesados en saber lo que a usted le gustaría decir acerca de la participación de las familias en su escuela.

1. ¿Qué es lo más útil que la escuela está haciendo para ayudarle a usted como padre de familia?

2. Por favor, díganos lo que usted DESEA que la escuela haga para que las cosas sean más fáciles para usted y su hijo.

3. ¿Cuál cree usted que sería la mejor forma para que los padres de familia en su escuela participen más?

4. ¿Se siente usted bienvenido y cómodo en la escuela? ¿Por qué?

HACIENDO UN BALANCE es un procedimiento fácil de usar para hacer un inventario de cómo trabaja la escuela con las familias y la comunidad, y cómo pueden trabajar mejor para ayudar a los estudiantes a triunfar. HACIENDO UN BALANCE, es un proyecto del Comité Nacional para Ciudadanos en la Educación.

Taking Stock / for Educators

The Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement

****

Dear Educators:

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to answer these questions about your school's efforts to work with parents. Research shows that involving parents helps children do better in school.

Asking all parts of the school community -- teachers, families, administrators, and staff -- about what the school is doing, and how effective it has been, will help us plan a program that meets everyone's needs and contributes to the children's success in school.

We appreciate all that you are already doing and greatly value your responses.

******

1. Name of School: _____
2. Date: _____
3. Please let us know who you are:

   ❑ Teacher

   ❑ Administrator

   ❑ Other Staff _____

All responses will be kept confidential

1. Does the school communicate openly and frequently with families?

For example:

a. Calendar of school events, holidays, and in-service days is sent to each family. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School communications are easy for parents to understand. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School handbook contains information specifically for parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Parents are encouraged to review their child's school records. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's communications:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

2. Does the school make special efforts to reach families from all racial, cultural and language groups in your community?

For example:

a. Report cards, school handbook, newsletter, and notices are available in languages other than English. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School reception staff can communicate well with <u>all</u> parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School newsletters, notices are sent to local churches, community meeting-places, local radio and TV stations that serve various cultural groups. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's efforts to reach all families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

3. Does the school make special efforts to reach working and single parents?

For example:

a. Meetings and events are held evenings and/or weekends to accommodate working parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Child care is provided during meeting times and other school events. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Efforts are made to reach parents at work or in the evening. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's efforts to reach working and single parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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4. Does the school make extra efforts to reach families who are not as involved?

For example:

a. School holds meetings at local churches, community centers, etc. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Special efforts are made to involve fathers and other men who are important to students. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Consultations are held with parents on how to reach other parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. School staff person is responsible for getting to know the parent community. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's extra efforts to reach parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

5. Does the school welcome parents and family members into the building and make them feel comfortable?

For example:

a. Posted signs warmly welcome families and provide directions. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School has a parent room or center. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School has comfortable waiting area for parents and visitors. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Office staff is friendly and helpful. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's welcome to families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

6. Are the school and its staff open and available to parents?

For example:

a. Parents and visitors are welcome any time during school day. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Telephone calls from parents are returned within 24 hours. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents may easily visit and observe the classrooms. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's openness and availability:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

7. Does the school encourage volunteer participation from families?

For example:

a. Wide range of volunteer opportunities offered at home and school. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School actively recruits family members. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School supports and rewards volunteers. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's volunteer program:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

8. Is the parent-teacher organization (PTA/PTO) active and strong?

For example:

a. PTA/PTO meets at least 4 times a year. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. At least 20% of families attend. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School staff regularly attends meetings. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Officers are elected by PTA/PTO members. Yes ❑ No ❑

e. Parents speak freely at the meetings. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's PTA/PTO:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

9. What are the PTA/PTO's major activities?

For example:

a. Recruiting least involved families. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Sponsoring school social events. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Discussing controversial issues (e.g. parent rights, sex education). Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Reviewing the school's academic performance. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the PTA/PTO's activities:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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10. Does the school reach out to the community?

For example:

a. School collaborates with community groups to provide extra services to students and families. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School participates in community events. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Partnerships are established with local business(es). Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's outreach to the community:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

11. Do teachers communicate well with parents?

For example:

a. Teachers inform parents how to reach them. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Teachers communicate at least once a month with each family. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents are notified right away when a student falls behind. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Parents are involved in resolving disciplinary problems. Yes ❑ No ❑

e. Teachers suggest home learning activities to help parents work with children. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the teachers' efforts to communicate with parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

12. Does the school provide opportunities for parents and teachers to develop a strong partnership?

For example:

a. School sponsors social events for parents and teachers. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Workshops are given for teachers and parents on how to work together. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents are invited to staff meetings. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's parent/teacher partnership efforts:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

13. Do parents have opportunities to develop a relationship with the principal?

For example:

a. Principal is friendly and gracious to parents and visitors. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Principal is available for meetings at parent request. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Principal attends most school events, including the social ones. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Principal gets to know most students. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the principal's accessibility to parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

14. Are parents involved in decision making at the school?

For example:

a. Parents participate in selecting the school principal. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Parents are involved in planning and evaluating school programs. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School actively seeks advice from parents on school issues. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate parent involvement in decision-making:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

15. Does the school have a clear policy on parent involvement?

For example:

a. School has a written policy on parent involvement. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Policy is included in the school handbook. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Policy is distributed to all families. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate school's parent involvement policy:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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16. Does the school give parents adequate information about the curriculum?

For example:

a. School offers written materials to explain the curriculum grade by grade. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Orientation is provided for parents about school's educational programs. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents are consulted about child's placement (e.g. Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education). Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's information on the curriculum:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

17. Does the school fully inform all parents about its goals for student achievement?

For example:

a. School presents to parents its goals for student achievement. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Parents are involved in setting these goals. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. If the school groups students by ability, this system is clearly explained to parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate how well the school communicates its goals:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

18. Are parents fully informed about student academic performance?

For example:

a. Report card and grades are clearly explained to parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Parents have opportunity to discuss how to improve their children's performance. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Results of school-wide performance on standardized tests are clearly interpreted for parents each year. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's information on student performance:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

19. Does the school help parents be more effective as parents?

For example:

a. Parents are involved in planning school activities for families. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School offers workshops on how parents can help students do better in school. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School organizes social events for parents to get to know one another. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. School arranges for community groups or agencies to provide training on topics of parent interest. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's support for parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

20. Does the school help families connect with community services?

For example:

a. School offers adult education and high school equivalency (GED) programs. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School makes referrals to family support resources and other social services. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School building is available for community activities. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's connections to community services:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

P.S. Please make sure that you have checked "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," or "Poor" for <u>every</u> question. Thank you.

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TAKING STOCK

The Last Word / For Educators

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to our questionnaire. We are also interested in hearing what YOU have to say about involving families in your school.

1. What do you think would be the best ways to involve parents in improving student achievement at the school?

2. What do you think needs to change for parents at your school to become more involved?

3. What kind of support would you need from the school to be better connected with your students' families?

4. Do you perceive that parents feel welcomed and comfortable at your school? Why?

TAKING STOCK is a user-friendly process for looking at how the school is working with its families and community, and how they can work together better to support student success. TAKING STOCK is a program of the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE). Copyright 1993 National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Tallying the Questionnaires

So now you have a pile of filled-out questionnaires. What to do with them? Included in this section are the following instructions for how to tally those questionnaires and sample Tally Sheets. The Tally Sheet masters for reproduction are included in the shrink-wrapped package.

1. Separate the Educator and Family questionnaires into two piles. **Discard every questionnaire with more than TWO questions left blank.** Tear off "The Last Word" (the back page) and separate these into Educator and Family piles. (You will use these when designing the Action Plan).

2. Count the questionnaires in each pile. Enter this number at the top of the appropriate tally sheet (Families or Educators), next to N = __.

3. Copy the tally sheets for each person on the tallying team. For example, if there are four people, ask two to work on the Family questionnaires and two to work on the Educator questionnaires. In this case, you would need two copies of each tally sheet.

4. Tally the responses to each question, making a tally mark for each YES checked under examples, and a tally mark under the rating checked (Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor). (See Example #1)

5. Once the responses are recorded from all the questionnaires, add the tally marks for each YES checked in the examples. These numbers will be used when developing the Action Plan.

6. Count the tally marks for each rating. If you are not using the software, multiply by the points assigned for each one (4, 3, 2, and 1). Next, add these to get the Total Score. (See Example #1)

7. If more than one person tallied a set of questionnaires, use one tally sheet as the master. Add the total from the other tally sheets in that set on the master, so that all results from one group are on one sheet.

Example #1:

1. Communicating Often and Openly
Examples: (Tally each yes checked, then count the tally marks for each example)

a. 𝍸 III — 8

b. 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 I — 16

c. III — 3

d. II — 2

Ratings: (Tally each check, then multiply the number of tally marks times the points for each rating to get the score, then add to get the Total Score)

Exc 𝍸 I	6	x 4 =	24
Good 𝍸 𝍸 IIII	14	x 3 =	42
Fair II	2	x 2 =	4
Poor I	1	x 1 = 1 =	Total Score 71

Taking Stock: Tally Sheet

School _____ Date_____ N = _____

1. Communicating Often and Openly

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1= ___

Total Score _____

---

2. Reaching all Cultures and Language Groups

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

3. Reaching Working and Single Parents

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d.. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

5. School's Welcome to Families

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

6. Open and Available School and Staff

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

7. Encouraging Volunteers

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

e. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

9. Major PTA/PTO Activities

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

10. Community Outreach
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

11. Teachers Communicate with Parents
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d.. ___

e. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

12. Parent-Teacher Partnership
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

13. Parent-Principal Partnership

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

14. Parents Involved in Decision-making

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

15. School's Parent Involvement Policy

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

16. Information about the Curriculum

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___ x 4 = ___

Good ___ x 3 = ___

Fair ___ x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

17. Goals for Student Achievement

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___ x 4 = ___

Good ___ x 3 = ___

Fair ___ x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

18. Information on Student Performance

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___ x 4 = ___

Good ___ x 3 = ___

Fair ___ x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

19. School Supports Parents
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

20. School Connects to Community Services
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

Who Responded to this Questionnaire? (see cover page)

Parent

Other Family Member

Friend

Teacher

Administrator

Other

1. What is the school doing that is most helpful to you as a parent?

2. Please tell us about what you WISH the school would do to make things easier for you and your child.

3. What do you think would be the best ways for parents at your school to become more involved?

4. Do you feel welcome and comfortable in the school? Why?

Haciendo un balance: Hoja de resultados para familias

Escuela_____ Fecha_____ N = ___

1. Comunicación frecuente y franca

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 =___

Bue. ___x 3 =___

Reg. ___x 2 =___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

2. Diferencias culturales y de idioma

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 =___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg ___x 2 = ___

Def ___x 1 =___ Puntaje Total _____

---

3. Comunicación con familias de un solo padre o donde ambos trabajan

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

4. Esfuerzo por estar en contacto con todas las familias

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

5. Sintiendose bienvenido y comodo

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

6. Sintiendose bien recibido y atendido

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

7. Motivación para prestar servicios voluntarios

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

8. Qué tan activo es el PTA/PTO

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

e. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___ x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

9. Actividades principales del PTA/PTO

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

10. Contacto con la comunidad

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

11. Los maestros colaboran con los padres

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

e. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

12. Desarrollando una relación estrecha entre padres y maestros

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

13. Relación del director con los padres

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

C. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 =___

Puntaje Total _____

---

14. Participación de los padres en la toma de decisiones

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___

Puntaje Total _____

---

15. Política de la escuela sobre la participación de los padres

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___

Puntaje Total _____

16. Información sobre el plan de estudio
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___
Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

17. Metas académicas para los estudiantes
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___
Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 =___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___ x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

18. Información sobre el rendimiento escolar de sus hijos
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___
Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

19. Apoyo de la escuela a los padres

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = Puntaje Total _____

---

20. Servicios comunitarios que ofrece la escuela

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

¿Quién respondió este cuestionario? (ver Introducción)

Padre/madre _____

Abuelo/abuela/otro familiar _____

Amigo/amiga _____

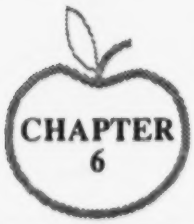
HACIENDO UN BALANCE: Preguntas Abiertas / Para Familias Tally Sheet

1. ¿Qué es lo más útil que la escuela está haciendo para ayudarle a usted como padre de familia?

2. Por favor, díganos lo que usted DESEA que la escuela haga para que las cosas sean más fáciles para usted y su hijo.

3. ¿Cuál cree usted que sería la mejor forma para que los padres de familia en su escuela participen más?

4. ¿Se siente usted bienvenido y cómodo en la escuela? ¿Por qué?



Scoring and Interpreting the Results

So now you have a pair of filled-out Tally Sheets. What's next? To help you figure out the results, several report sheets for presenting the opinions of your school's families and educators are included in this chapter:

#1 Summary Score Sheet for Families
#2 Summary Score Sheet for Educators
#3 Family Report Card
#4 Educator Report Card
#5 Highs and Lows
#6 On Balance
#7 Parents in Action
#8 School Profile
#9 Troubleshooting

1. If you have the software, enter the results from the tally sheets and print the reports. If not, use the *Taking Stock:* Summary Score Sheets for Families (#1) and for Educators (#2) to summarize the ratings from the Tally Sheets. (See Example #2, boxes a and b). Tip: use a hand calculator.

    a. Enter the Total Score for each question in the first column.
    b. Compute the Average Score for each question, using the directions on the Summary Score Sheets.
    c. Next, compute the Average Score for each section.

2. Using the Summary Score Sheets, fill out the Family Report Card (#3) and the Educator Report Card (#4). Use the grading scale at the bottom of the Report Card. (See example #2, box c).

    a. Based on the average scores on the Summary Score Sheets, give the school a Grade for each question using the grading scale at the bottom of the Report Card.
    b. Based on the Final Scores on the Summary Score Sheets, give a Final Grade for each of the five sections.

3. Fill out Highs and Lows (#5), On Balance (#6), and Parents in Action (#7) using the instructions given.

4. Fill out the School Profile (#8).

    a. Enter the numbers of Educators and Family Members responding to the questionnaires.
    b. Enter the grades for each section.
    c. Place a check by the sections where the letter grades for Educators and Families are different.
    d. Note the information under Highs and Lows.
    e. In the On Balance section, check the blanks according to the problem areas circled in the On Balance sheet.
    f. In the Parents in Action section, check the blanks according to the problem areas circled in the Parents in Action sheet.

5. Use the *Taking Stock*: Troubleshooting sheet (#9) to note problem areas identified in the example questions. (See Example #3) This will come in handy when the action plan is executed.

6. When finished, go to Section IV: The Action Plan.

Example 2:

a.

Taking Stock Tally Sheet – Families

School Waller Middle Date 9/12 N = 23

19. School Supports Parents

Examples:

a. 𝍸 III	8			
b. 𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 I	16			
c. III	3			
d. II	2			
Ratings:				
Exc 𝍸 I	6	x 4 =	24	
Good 𝍸 𝍸 IIII	14	x 3 =	42	
Fair II	2	x 2 =	4	Total Score 71
Poor I	1	x 1 =	1	

20. School Connects to Community Services

Examples:

a. 𝍸 𝍸 I	11			
b. IIII	4			
c.	0			
Ratings:				
Exc IIII	4	x 4 =	16	
Good 𝍸 III	8	x 3 =	24	
Fair 𝍸 𝍸 I	11	x 2 =	22	Total Score 62
Poor	0	x 1 =	0	

b.

Taking Stock: Summary Score Sheet – Families

Number Responding: N = 23 School Waller Middle School

1. Enter the Total Score from the tally sheet for each question.
2. Average Score = Total Score **divided by** N.
3. Grand Total = The Sum of the Total Scores
4. Final Score = The Grand Total **divided by** the number of questions for the section, **divided by** N.

	Total Score	Average Score	Final Score
More Effective Parents			
19. Supporting Parents	71	3.1	
20. Connections to Services	62	2.7	
GRAND TOTAL	133		
	÷2, +N=		2.9

c.

Taking Stock: Family Report Card

School Waller Middle School

		FINAL GRADE
Helping Parents Be More Effective		
19. School Supports Parents	B+	
20. School Connects to Community Services	B	B

A 3.2 - 4.0 *Great job. Keep up the good work!*
B 2.6 - 3.1 *Good work. A little more will put you on top!*
C 2.0 - 2.5 *Solid beginning. Time for some next steps!*
U 1.0 - 1.9 *Needs improvement. Let's get to work!*

Taking Stock: Summary Score Sheet -- Families

Number Responding: N= _____ **School** _____

1. Enter the Total Score from the bottom of each question on the Tally Sheet.
2. Average Score = Total Score divided by N.
3. Grand Total = The Sum of the Total Scores
4. Final Score = The Grand Total divided by the number of questions for the section, divided by N.

	Total Score	Average Score	Final Score
Reaching out to Families			
1. Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Groups	_____	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	_____	
4. Reaching All Families	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+4 ,+ N =		_____
Welcoming Families			
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____	
6. Open & Available School & Staff	_____	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+6,+ N =		_____
Strong Relationships			
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+5, + N =		_____
Understanding the Curriculum			
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+3,+ N =		_____
More Effective Parents			
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____	
20. School Connects Community Services	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+2,+ N =		_____

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Taking Stock: Summary Score Sheet -- Educators

Number Responding: N= _____ **School _____**

1. Enter the Total Score from the tally sheet for each question.
2. Average Score = Total Score divided by N.
3. Grand Total = The Sum of the Total Scores
4. Final Score = The Grand Total divided by the number of questions for the section, divided by N.

	Total Score	Average Score	Final Score
Reaching out to Families			
1. Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Groups	_____	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	_____	
4. Reaching All Families	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 4, + N =		_____
Welcoming Families			
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____	
6. Open & Available Schoo! & Staff	_____	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 6 ,+ N =		_____
Strong Relationships			
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 5, + N =		_____
Understanding the Curriculum			
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 3 ,+ N =		_____
More Effective Parents			
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____	
20. School Connects Community Services	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 2 ,+ N =		_____

Taking Stock:Family Report Card

❖ ❖ ❖

School _____

	Grade	FINAL GRADE
Reaching out to Families		
1. Communicating Often and Openly with Families	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Language Groups	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	
		____
Welcoming Families to the School Building		
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	
		____
Developing Strong Relationships		
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	
		____
Helping Parents Understand the Curriculum		
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	
		____
Helping Parents Be More Effective		
19. School Supports Parents	_____	
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	
		____

A 3.2 - 4.0 *Great job. Keep up the good work!*
B 2.6 - 3.1 *Good work. A little more will put you on top!*
C 2.0 - 2.5 *Solid beginning. Time for some next steps!*
U 1.0 - 1.9 *Needs improvement. Let's get to work!*

Taking Stock: Educator Report Card

❖ ❖ ❖

School _____

	Grade	FINAL GRADE
Reaching out to Families		
1. Communicating Often and Openly with Families	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Language Groups	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	
		_____
Welcoming Families to the School Building		
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	
		_____
Developing Strong Relationships		
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	
		_____
Helping Parents Understand the Curriculum		
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	
		_____
Helping Parents Be More Effective		
19. School Supports Parents	_____	
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	
		_____

A 3.2 - 4.0 *Great job. Keep up the good work!*
B 2.6 - 3.1 *Good work. A little more will put you on top!*
C 2.0 - 2.5 *Solid beginning. Time for some next steps!*
U 1.0 - 1.9 *Needs improvement. Let's get to work!*

Taking Stock: Highs and Lows

School: _____

High Five: Using the Summary Score Sheets, list the five **top-scoring** questions, highest score first, for both Families and Educators. For easy reference, list the question number, the **Total Score** and the short description of the question. Repeat for the five **lowest-scoring** questions, listing the lowest score first.

High Five:

Families			Educators		
Q#	Total Score	Description	Q#	Total Score	Description
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____

Low Five:

Families			Educators		
Q#	Total Score	Description	Q#	Total Score	Description
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____
____	____	_____	____	____	_____

Answer these questions:

1. What do BOTH families and educators rank HIGH?

2. What do BOTH families and educators rank LOW?

3. What do Families rank HIGH, but educators rank LOW?

4. What do educators rank HIGH, but families rank LOW?

Taking Stock: On Balance

Another way to analyze your results is to ask some related questions about whether the school's efforts are balanced.

Social connections, or Who Knows Who? Is the school working to develop *social* relationships among families, community members, teachers, and administrators? Spending time together informally, such as at spaghetti dinners, family picnics, dances, or festive get-togethers, allows people to get to know and trust each other, to feel more comfortable talking together. Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 6:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
3. Reaching Working and Single Parents	_____	_____
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	_____
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	_____
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷6) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE that number. Consider some activities that will help people get to know each other. Also look at how activities that the school already sponsors can be made more friendly and social.

Substantive Information, or What's Really Happening? Are families adequately informed about the school's educational programs, goals for student achievement, and how well students are doing? Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 4:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
9. PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____
11. Teacher Communication	_____	_____
16. Information About the Curriculum	_____	_____
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷4) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE that number. This means that parents need more information on the educational program and student performance.

Taking Stock: On Balance (continued)

Accessibility, or Who Comes Inside? Is the school readily accessible to families? May they easily look at their child's records, visit the classrooms, meet with teachers? Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 5:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
1. Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____
2. Reaching All Cultural & Language Groups	_____	_____
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	_____
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷5) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE that number. Make sure the school is not raising barriers to easy family access to the building and its staff.

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Inclusion, or Who Sits at the Table? Is the school working to include parents in its daily life? Are parents involved in plans for improvement, consulted about problems or changes in program, encouraged to volunteer and feel a real part of the school? Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 5:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	_____
19. School Supports Parent	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷ 5) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number. Consider inviting parents to sit at the table when important matters are being discussed.

Taking Stock: Parents in Action

Parents play many parts in their children's education. Joyce Epstein, Co-Director of the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, has identified six key roles: Parenting, Communicating, Supporting, Learning, Decision-Making, and Connecting with Community. Let's look at what *Taking Stock* reveals about the school's suppport for parents in these different kinds of activities.

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Type 1: Parenting -- Developing parenting skills and positive conditions at home to support learning

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (+2) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

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Type 2: Communicating -- Exchanging information between home and school about children's learning and school programs

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
1. Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____
2. Reaching all Cultures and Language Groups	_____	_____
3. Reaching Working and Single Parents	_____	_____
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	_____
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____
13. Principal-Parent Relationship	_____	_____
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (+7) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

Type 3: Supporting -- Participating as volunteers, tutoring, advising, and attending school events

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	_____
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (+5) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

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Type 4: Learning -- Creating a climate for learning at home and taking part in learning opportunities at school

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (+3) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

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Type 5: Decision Making -- Being involved in school governance and advocacy

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (+3) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B) CIRCLE this number.

Type 6: Connecting with Community -- Linking school and families with community resources to strengthen children's learning both in and out of school

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷ 2) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

All Types (1-6): Supporting *all* Parent Activities

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷ 2) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number. Make sure that your PTA/PTO activities and the school's parent involvement policy support and encourage all six types of family involvement in education, not just a few.

Taking Stock: School Profile

School: _____ Date Taken: _____

Who Participated?

EDUCATORS		FAMILY	
Teachers	_____	Parents	_____
Administrators	_____	Other Family	_____
Other Staff	_____	Friends	_____

How Do the Report Cards Compare?

	Family Grade	Educator Grade	Check if Different
Reaching Out to Families	_____	_____	_____
Welcoming Families to School	_____	_____	_____
Developing Strong Relationships	_____	_____	_____
Understanding the Curriculum	_____	_____	_____
Helping Parents Be More Effective	_____	_____	_____

Highs and Lows

BOTH families and educators rank high:

BOTH families and educators rank low:

On Balance

	❖ NEEDS ATTENTION ❖	
	Families	**Educators**
Social connections/Who Knows Who?	_____	_____
Substantive Information/What's Really Happening?	_____	_____
Accessibility/Who Comes Inside?	_____	_____
Inclusion/Who Sits at the Table?	_____	_____

Parents in Action

	❖ NEEDS ATTENTION ❖	
	Families	**Educators**
Type 1: Parenting -- Developing parenting skills and positive conditions at home to support learning	_____	_____
Type 2: Communicating -- Exchanging information about children's learning and school programs	_____	_____
Type 3: Supporting -- Participating as volunteers and attending school events	_____	_____
Type 4: Learning -- Creating a climate for learning at home and taking part in learning opportunities at school	_____	_____
Type 5: Decision-Making -- Being involved in school governance and advocacy	_____	_____
Type 6: Connecting with Community -- Linking school and families with community resources to strengthen children's learning in and out of school	_____	_____

Taking Stock: Troubleshooting

Remember all the YES answers you tallied under the examples? This Troubleshooting sheet will help you use that information to spot areas that need improvement.

1. Divide the number of parents/family members, then educators, who responded to this survey (N) by 3. **Family N + 3 = ____. Educator N + 3 = ___.**
2. Look at the Tally Sheet for Families. CIRCLE all numbers in the examples section that are less than N + 3. This means that fewer than one-third of the families answered YES to these questions. (See Example #3, box a)
3. Take this Troubleshooting form and place a check in the Families column by the questions where the numbers are circled on the Tally Sheet. (See Example #3, box b)
4. Look at the Taking Stock: Tally Sheet/Educators. CIRCLE all numbers in the examples section that are less than N + 3. This means that fewer than one-third of the families answered "yes" to these questions.
5. Take this Troubleshooting form and place a check in the Educators column by the questions where the numbers are circled on the Tally Sheet.

Example #3:

a.

Taking Stock: Tally Sheet/Families

School Gillespie Date 10/92 N = 46

19. School Supports Parents
Examples:
a. 16
b. 32
c. 6
d. 4
Ratings:

Exc	13	x 4 = 48	
Good	28	x 3 = 84	
Fair	4	x 2 = 8	Total
Poor	2	x 1 = 2	Score 142

b.

Taking Stock: Troubleshooting on Family Issues

Families N+ 3 = 15
Educators N+ 3 = __

	❖ Needs Improvement ❖ Families	Educators
19. Does the school help you be more effective as parents?		
a. Does the school involve you in planning activities for families?	☐	☐
b. Does the school offer workshops on how to help your child do better in school?	☐	☐
c. Does the school help organize events for parents to get to know each other?	☑	☐
d. Does the school bring in community groups or agencies to provide training on topics of interest to you?	☑	☐

Taking Stock: Troubleshooting

Families N ÷ 3 = ____
Educators N ÷ 3 = ____

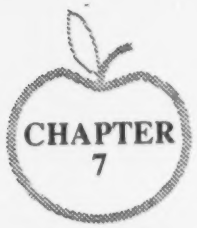
	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	**Educators**
1. Does the school communicate often and openly with you?		
a. Does the school keep you informed about important dates, activities, and events?	❑	❑
b. Are communications from the school easy to understand?	❑	❑
c. Does the school handbook provide useful information for parents?	❑	❑
d. Has the school encouraged you to review your child's records?	❑	❑
2. Does the school respect and respond to its community's cultural and language differences?		
a. Are report cards and newsletters available in a language you understand?	❑	❑
b. Does the school reception staff communicate well with you?	❑	❑
c. Is information about school events available in your neighborhood, such as at local churches and over the radio?	❑	❑
3. If you are a single or working parent, do you feel the school makes a special effort to reach you?		
a. Are meetings and events held evenings and/or weekends to fit your schedule?	❑	❑
b. Is child care provided during meetings and at other school events?	❑	❑
c. Does the school make efforts to reach you at work or in the evening?	❑	❑
4. Does the school make extra efforts to reach all families?		
a. Have you been invited to school gatherings at places in the community, such as local churches or community centers?	❑	❑
b. Are special efforts made to involve fathers and other men important to your children?	❑	❑
c. Have you ever been asked for advice or help in reaching other parents?	❑	❑
d. Have you been introduced to a school staff person whose job is getting to know your community?	❑	❑

	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
5. Does the school welcome you into the building and make you feel comfortable?		
a. Are directions clearly posted to help you find your way around?	❑	❑
b. Does the school have a parent room or center?	❑	❑
c. Is the office waiting area comfortable?	❑	❑
d. Is the office staff friendly and helpful?	❑	❑
6. Are the school and its staff open and available to you?		
a. Are you welcome in the building any time during the school day?	❑	❑
b. Does the school return your calls within 24 hours?	❑	❑
c. May you easily visit or observe the classroom?	❑	❑
7. Does the school encourage your volunteer participation?		
a. Are there interesting volunteer opportunities you can do at school or at home?	❑	❑
b. Have you been encouraged to volunteer?	❑	❑
c. Does the school appreciate your volunteer efforts?	❑	❑
8. Is the parent-teacher organization (PTA/PTO) active and strong?		
a. Does the PTA/PTO meet at least four times a year?	❑	❑
b. Do you enjoy attending the meetings?	❑	❑
c. Do your child's teachers attend the meetings?	❑	❑
d. Do parents elect PTA/PTO officers?	❑	❑
e. Are you given time to express your opinions at meetings?	❑	❑

	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
9. What are the PTA/PTO's major activities?		
a. Recruiting new members?	❑	❑
b. Sponsoring school social events?	❑	❑
c. Discussing controversial issues (for example, parents' rights, sex education)?	❑	❑
d. Reviewing the school's academic performance?	❑	❑
10. Does the school reach out to your community?		
a. Does the school work with community groups to provide extra services for families, such as tutoring, rent assistance, or housing?	❑	❑
b. Does the school participate in community events?	❑	❑
c. Have you heard about any partnerships the school has with local businesses?	❑	❑
11. Do your children's teachers work closely with you?		
a. Do teachers tell you how to contact them?	❑	❑
b. Do you hear from your child's teachers at least once a month?	❑	❑
c. Are you notified right away if your child falls behind?	❑	❑
d. Are you involved in solving discipline problems?	❑	❑
e. Do teachers suggest home learning activities for you to use with your child?	❑	❑
12. Does the school provide opportunities for you and your child's teacher to develop a strong partnership?		
a. Does the school sponsor social events for parents and teachers to get to know each other?	❑	❑
b. Have you been notified of workshops on how parents and teachers can work better together?	❑	❑
c. Are you ever invited to school staff meetings?	❑	❑

	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
13. Does the principal make an effort to know parents and students?		
a. Is the principal friendly and polite to you and other parents?	❑	❑
b. Is the principal available to meet with parents?	❑	❑
c. Does the principal attend most school events?	❑	❑
d. Does the principal know who your child is?	❑	❑
14. Do you feel that parents are involved in how the school is run?		
a. Are parents included in selecting the school principal?	❑	❑
b. Are parents involved in planning and evaluating school programs?	❑	❑
c. Does the school actively seek advice from parents on school issues?	❑	❑
15. Is the school's parent involvement policy clear to you?		
a. Is the policy in writing?	❑	❑
b. Is the policy included in the school handbook?	❑	❑
c. Do you have a copy of the policy?	❑	❑
16. Does the school explain what your child is learning and how he or she is being taught?		
a. Does the school offer materials explaining the curriculum grade by grade?	❑	❑
b. Does the school provide parent orientation about educational programs (Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education, for example)?	❑	❑
c. Do you understand your child's placement?	❑	❑

	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
17. Does the school fully inform parents about its goals for student achievement?		
a. Have you been informed of the school's goals for student achievement?	❑	❑
b. Were parents involved in setting these goals?	❑	❑
c. Does the school explain whether students are grouped by ability?	❑	❑
18. Do you feel fully informed about your child's academic performance?		
a. Are report card and grades fully explained to you?	❑	❑
b. Do you have an opportunity to discuss how to improve your child's performance privately with teachers?	❑	❑
c. Are results of standardized tests, for your child and the whole class, clearly explained to you?	❑	❑
19. Does the school help you be more effective as parents?		
a. Does the school involve you in planning activities for families?	❑	❑
b. Does the school offer workshops on how to help your child do better in school?	❑	❑
c. Does the school help organize events for parents to get to know each other?	❑	❑
d. Does the school bring in community groups or agencies to provide training on topics of interest to you?	❑	❑
20. Are community services offered through the school?		
a. Does the school offer adult education and high school equivalency (GED) programs?	❑	❑
b. Are social services available through the school (for example, health services, family counseling)?	❑	❑
c. Is the school building available for community activities?	❑	❑



Preparing the Report

Once the Survey Team has finished tallying, scoring and interpreting the survey results, it is time to prepare a short report to the school community. A suggested outline for the report to be prepared by the Survey Team is shown below. The *Taking Stock* interpretation forms are designed to make the topics clear and the data from the survey easily understandable. The next step is a narrative report to the school community with basic information about the *Taking Stock* process, the scores given by families and educators, and some recommendations for an action plan.

Following the outline is an example of what the narrative report might look like. It does not attempt to present every piece of information learned from the inventory, but rather to point out the areas rated high and low by the educators and parents, and the questions on which the rankings of the two groups are quite different. The analysis of the data by the two alternative frameworks, On Balance and Parents in Action, are included to demonstrate whether the school does have a balanced approach and whether specific areas are identified where the school's parent involvement program should be strengthened.

The report, including the narrative and report sheets, should be widely distributed. Copies should go to all teachers and administrators in the school, the PTA, and other participating parent and community groups. A copy could also be shared with the superintendent's office and the school board. The press release or letter accompanying the report should emphasize that this is the first step in the school's efforts to become more active in involving families and community in all aspects of the school.

Suggested Outline for Report on *Taking Stock*

Introductory Remarks

- When survey was conducted
- Numbers of educators and family members responding
- Names of members of the Survey Team
- How the survey was scored

Report Summary

- Broad agreements
- Differences between educator and family scores
- Highs and Lows
- On Balance
- Parents in Action

Responses from "The Last Word"

Conclusion and Recommendations

***Taking Stock* Report Sheets**

#3 Family Report Card
#4 Educator Report Card
#5 Highs and Lows
#6 On Balance
#7 Parents in Action
#8 School Profile Sheet

Taking Stock: A Sample Report

School: Armstrong Middle School

Introduction

This is a report on the *Taking Stock* survey administered to educators, parents, and other community members on May 14th and 15th, 1993. This report is based completely on how the parents and educators who participated view the school's partnership with its families. A total of 54 educators and 129 family members (about ¼ of all families) responded to the survey.

The members of the Team who administered the survey and tabulated the results are: [give names and affiliations; for example, Ernestine Kincaid, PTA President; Aretha Waller, parent; Ed Estes, teacher and union rep; Sandra Ortiz, Principal; etc.]

Report Summary

While the results are presented in a number of different forms, the Educator and Family Report Cards, Report Sheets #3 and #4, are an easy, familiar way to summarize the findings. Among those responding to the survey, there was broad agreement, with both groups indicating that the school is doing better in some areas than others.

Overall, parents rated the school somewhat higher than educators in all areas covered. Parents and educators did agree in two areas; they gave the school a "B" on informing parents about the educational program, and a "C" on supporting parents to be more effective as parents and community members. In the other three areas, parents rated the school higher than the educators. Grades given by parents ranged from "A" (for the section on developing strong relationships) to "C" (helping parents be more effective) while the grades given by educators ranged from "B" (for helping parents understand the curriculum) to "C" (for helping parents be more effective and reaching out to families).

Highs, Lows, and Discrepancies

There was considerable agreement between educators and families about the school's highs and lows. Families and educators agree that the school is doing well in these areas:

- the parent-principal relationship
- the school and staff are open and available
- the school volunteer program

Other areas scoring in the educators' top five:

- teachers communicate well with parents
- parents are informed about student academic performance

On the other hand, parents gave high marks to these topics:

- the school communicates well with families
- the PTO is strong and active

There was also some agreement between educators and families on the lows. Both groups **felt that more could be done to support parents and to reach out to single and working parents.** Parents also gave low ratings to:

- connecting families to social services
- respecting cultural and language diversity
- involving parents in decision-making

The educators also gave low ratings to:

- school's written policy on parent involvement
- school's reaching out to the community for help
- providing families with information about the curriculum.

On Balance

In this analysis, we looked at how well *balanced* the school's efforts have been. Has the school promoted friendly, social connections as well as provided substantive information? We know that some schools are good at building cordial relationships, but may not inform parents about the curriculum and how students are performing on tests. Other schools may do a good job of presenting the educational program and explaining student performance, but still keep relationships distant and formal.

We also looked at whether the school is open to parents, both allowing them easy access to the building and including them in its inner life. Schools that allow parents to visit the classroom, inspect their children's records, talk to teachers, and meet with the principal, but still may not invite parents into the "inner sanctum." Other schools may be willing to put parents on school improvement committees or give the PTA/PTO a place on the governing team, but still restrict parent access to the classrooms. Again, we think that a balance is the most productive approach.

At Armstrong, there is much agreement between families and educators about this balance, and on the whole, their marks are high (B). There were two areas of concern. **Both families and educators feel that more work could be done to develop social connections between teachers and families, and educators feel that families should have more substantive information about the curriculum and the educational program.** Although families did not rank the substantive information below a low B, their responses also showed interest in improvement.

Parents in Action

This section, on report sheet #7, looks at parents' roles in the school. **There are two areas where both families and educators indicate more attention is needed: support of parenting skills and connecting with the community.**

Both parents and educators scored two areas as satisfactory, parents as school supporters and parent involvement in decision-making. In the other two areas, communicating and learning, the family scores were satisfactory, but educators gave the school low ratings.

The Last Word

The responses to the open-ended questions at the end of the survey, entitled "The Last Word," included additional suggestions which the Action Team should consider when designing the Action Plan.

Families responded that the following actions would make things easier for them and their child:

- Homework "hotline"
- More time between classes for restroom use
- Better information about school rules on missed assignments
- School Based Management meetings at night, not after school
- More parent education

The teachers felt that the following would improve parent involvement and student achievement:

- Report card pick-up
- Parents attending classes with children
- Compensation for parents who attend classes

Educators also felt that they could be better connected with the families of their students if:

- Teachers had more time, especially release time with compensation
- Parents attended early childhood and child development classes

Recommendations

To address the areas of concern raised by *Taking Stock*, we recommend that a school team be convened to study and review the results. The team should include parents, staff, administrators, and community members. This team will then determine priorities and establish an action plan for the school.

The Action Team should take a close look at the report cards and school profiles to see which areas were rated low by one group or by both. Low rankings indicate places where parents and educators feel that the school could be doing a better job. They should decide whether or not these are priority areas.

Many comments made by both family members and teachers suggest activities which can be addressed and implemented rather easily. The Action Team should include these in their plan, demonstrating that the concerns of both educators and parents are being considered.

Designing an Action Plan

1. Form an Action Team

The next step is to take action on the findings from *Taking Stock*. The Survey Team which conducted the inventory, scored and analyzed the results, and prepared the report, will now evolve into the Action Team, which is responsible for developing an Action Plan to improve family and community involvement at the school. Although the Action Team should certainly be larger and more representative than the Survey Team, the team who administered *Taking Stock* should be encouraged to continue. We recommend that the Action Team include a total of 15-20 members, or a group small enough for effective discussion, but large enough for complete representation. At least two people from the Survey Team should become members of the Action Team, since they will be thoroughly knowledgeable about the survey and its results.

The group developing the Action Plan should have broad membership, representing administrators, teachers, parents, and community. At the middle and high school level, students should also be a part of the Action Team. Everyone serving should be committed to enhancing parent involvement, and should agree to work not only on designing the plan, but also on implementing activities and projects, and assessing their effectiveness.

The principal of the school will probably confer with the other administrators to decide who will serve on the Action Team. The teachers could elect several representatives, or they could simply name those who express the interest and willingness to serve.

Because families have a critical role to play in the process, parents representing different demographic groups and varying perspectives should participate in all aspects of the planning and implementation of the Action Plan. The PTA or PTO leadership should be represented, as well as independent parent or community groups. In addition, parents representing the various racial, ethnic, and linguistic groups in the school communities should be personally invited and urged to become a part of the process.

The family representatives on the Action Team should take some time to meet together, to go over the results of the inventory, with special attention to the responses from families and to the questions on which there were divergent responses from administrators, teachers, and parents. The contributions of families to the development and implementation of the Action Plan will be stronger and more focussed if family representatives reach agreement among themselves.

One strategy parents might consider is to organize a parent committee around the issues of how to strengthen parent involvement and family/school partnerships. This group could provide proposals and ideas to the family representatives on the Team and be available to review and react to specific details of the Action Plan under consideration.

Although community leaders and advocates may not have participated in the survey, they can play an important role on the Action Team or on subcommittees in improving parent involvement policies and practices at the school. Many suggestions for activities include community groups. Community leaders from different ethnic and language groups represented in the school population have a special contribution to make in terms of the kinds of programs that will be responsive to the needs of families from different cultural and language backgrounds.

2. Review and Study Results of Parent Involvement Inventory

The first major activity of the Action Team is to conduct a careful and comprehensive review of the responses to the questionnaires and the report prepared by the Survey Team. If the report summarizes and analyzes the results of the inventory, as suggested in an earlier section, the Action Team will have a head start with their task.

An early meeting might be scheduled for a full discussion of the survey methodology, the scoring process, and how the Report Sheets were prepared. Those members of the Action Team who also served on the Survey Team can answer questions from new members and fully explain the procedures and conclusions presented in the report.

Because the major purpose of *Taking Stock* is to improve family-school relationships, the members of the Action Team should make an effort to keep attention focussed on constructive suggestions for improvement rather than to assign blame for poor performance. It may be natural for educators or parents to become defensive in response to the data yielded by the inventory. We encourage all members of the team to accept any low scores as indicators of areas needing attention and as opportunities to design an improved program that will receive high marks from all parties.

A low average score for a question does not necessarily mean that the activities in place are worthless and should be discarded. It may just mean that they were not implemented as conscientiously as possible, or that the activity needs some redesign or additional resources. In Chapter 10, "Moving Beyond Barriers: Steps to Success," we explore barriers to successful implementation of school-family partnerships and offer helpful tips and suggestions for overcoming them. It is important that the Action Team make every effort to build on what currently is being done, rather than to start all activities anew.

3. Gather and Analyze the Demographics of Families in the School

In addition to the data from the questionnaires, it is important for the Action Team to be well informed about the social and economic characteristics of families in the school. Some of this information can be provided by the city planning office, the school district or local civic groups such as the Urban League, other factors can be estimated by administrators, teachers, community leaders, and parents. The following questions, suggested by the National School Public Relations Association, are intended as a guide for the Action Team; some members may have additional characteristics to add to the list.

Our School's Families

1. What proportion of students come from...?

____ single-parent households
____ two-parent households
____ foster homes or child care institutions
____ non-parent households (relatives or guardians)

2. What proportion of children have ever experienced serious disruption -- separation, divorce or death -- in the family?

____ less than 25%
____ about half
____ the great majority

3. What is the economic/educational status of the families?

____ proportion eligible for free lunch program
____ proportion with one college-educated parent
____ proportion owning at least one automobile
____ proportion with telephone at home
____ proportion that has undergone serious economic stress within the last two years
____ proportion of parents with reading difficulties

4. What is the racial/cultural/linguistic background of the families?

____ proportion of students from racial/ethnic groups
Identify: _____
____ languages spoken by parents
Identify: _____
____ proportion of parents with limited-English proficiency

5. What proportion of children live in families where both parents, or custodial parents, are employed outside the home for most of the school day?

____ less than 25%
____ about half
____ the great majority

6. What proportion of families are new to the community this year?

____ less than 10%
____ less than 25%
____ about half
____ more than half

4. Set Priorities

The first step in setting priorities is to examine the questions that received the lowest scores from the educators and families, and those questions where a discrepancy in scoring occurred. The Action Team may very well decide that those are the areas which should receive the most attention in the coming year.

Table 3-A, "Setting Priorities for Action Plan" provides a framework for members of the Action Team to see at a glance which questions and issues from the survey may require action. Next to Column 1, place a check by those questions which were rated lowest by educators, shown on Report Sheet #5, "Highs & Lows." The same procedure is then followed in column 2 for the questions ranked lowest by the families. Report Sheet #5 also lists those areas where there is a discrepancy in score between the rankings of the educators and those of the families. These should be checked in column 3.

Columns 4, 5, and 6 of the Table suggest additional inquiries which the Team should consider for the purpose of setting priorities and determining activities for the Action Plan.

- **Is this area important for our school?** Does it matter to us? Will it make a difference here? If the Team agrees that the answer is "Yes," place a check in column 4 beside the question.

- **Is this area urgent?** Do we need to work on this right away? The school may be developing a proposal, or responding to a state or district mandate, or be involved in a controversy that requires action immediately. Or the team may have other good reasons to agree that this creates a problem that should be addressed now, not later. If so, place a check in column 5.

- **Are we likely to succeed if we work on this?** Is it doable? The area under consideration may be mired in a controversy at the moment, or in limbo pending a union or board agreement. If the way seems clear, place a check in column 6.

One way of identifying priority areas for the Action Plan is to choose those with the most checks on the table. Add up all the checks for each question and put the total in column 7. The Action Team may also want to look at the grouping or clustering of the questions, to determine if they fall into a particular pattern. The report from the Survey Team uses three different frameworks to examine and analyze the results of the inventory; the first is the grouping on the inventory, the five basic elements of Family/School Partnership. The second is the "On Balance" analysis (Report Sheet #6), using four alternative categories; and the third is the typology of family involvement developed by Joyce Epstein, shown on Report Sheet #7, "Parents in Action."

If the questions with the lowest scores cluster in one or two categories of these typologies, the priorities for action might be developed around the more general topic, such as building strong relationships, developing social connections or involving parents in decision-making, rather than according to individual questions. Whatever the Team decides, we recommend limiting the number of priorities addressed to no more than five.

Table 8-A. Setting Priorities for the Action Plan

	Column 1 Educator Low Five	Column 2 Family Low Five	Column 3 Discrepancy?	Column 4 Important?	Column 5 Urgent?	Column 6 Doable?	Column 7 Total Checks
I. Reaching Out							
1. Communicating Often							
2. Reaching All Cultures							
3. Reaching Single Parents							
4. Reaching All Families							
II. Welcoming							
5. Welcoming Families							
6. Available School & Staff							
7. Encouraging Volunteers							
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO							
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities							
10. Community Outreach							
III. Relationships							
11. Teacher/Parent Communication							
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership							
13. Parent-Principal Relationship							
14. Parents in Decision-Making							
15. Parent Involvement Policy							
IV. Curriculum							
16. Curriculum Information							
17. Goals for Achievement							
18. Student Performance							
V. Effective Parents							
19. School Supports Parents							
20. Community Services							

5. Prepare the Draft of the Action Plan

Now that about five areas have been chosen for action, members of the Action Team can go to Report Sheet #9, "Troubleshooting." This form identifies areas that need attention, which were identified by the respondents under the examples for each question. This will help to identify the activities and programs to be included in the Action Plan. It will also be helpful to review the comments made on the "Last Word" section of the inventory, to hear about specific suggestions for action directly from the respondents.

Next, consult Chapter 10, "Moving Beyond Barriers: Steps to Success." For each question, there is a Steps to Success sheet, which gives tips and suggestions related to the question area. Additional resources are given in Section V. When activities are already underway, the Action Plan should indicate what changes and improvements need to be made. For action areas that are just beginning, a more comprehensive design may be needed.

As you consider adding various components to the Action Plan, think about Who? What? and When? **Who** will be responsible for undertaking this project, task, activity? **What** will they do to carry out the goals and objectives of the plan? **When** will they start the process? These questions should all be answered by the Action Plan, specifying in detail new programs to be implemented, as well as revitalization and expansion of existing programs.

The San Diego County Office of Education has designed two worksheets that may be useful in developing the Action Plan. One is shown in Table 8-B; the Priority Area would be the topic identified on the priority list. The worksheet includes the following:

- What will be done
- Purpose of the activity
- By whom
- When
- Materials/equipment needed
- Evidence of success

The second is a format called a "Home-School Partnership Planning Calendar," shown here as Table 8-C. There is space to plan activities for each month of the year, for the five priority areas identified by the Action Team. The chart could also be expanded to include more areas if that is appropriate.

In addition to drawing up the list of activities or projects, the team should draft a proposed structure to implement the various components of the Action Plan. One suggestion is to expand into a Family School Partnership Task Force, adding members so that all the constituencies are represented: families, community leaders, teachers, administrators, other school personnel, students, and maybe a member of the school board. The criteria for membership should be carefully spelled out, and a procedure proposed for selecting those who will serve on the Task Force. Active members of the Survey Team and contributors to the Action Plan should continue as members of the Task Force, but the group will be more responsive and representative if Task Force members are selected in an open manner. It should be clear that they are not hand-picked by the principal, other administrators, or the PTA/PTO leadership.

The Action Team should prepare an outline of the Action Plan, and recommendations for a Task Force, clearly marked *draft*. This should include a summary of the results of the inventory, an account of the deliberations of the Action Team, along with their conclusions, the rationale for the activities, tasks, and policies recommended, and the goals and objectives for each priority action area.

TABLE 8-B

ACTION PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Priority Area:

_____

Activities:

What Will Be Done	Purpose of the Activity	By Whom	When	Materials/ Equipment Needed	Evidence of Success

TABLE 8-C

HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PLANNING CALENDAR

Priority areas:

Month	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
SEP					
OCT					
NOV					

6. Gain Support for the Action Plan

The Action Team should circulate the Action Plan to a number of individuals and organizations, for critique and comments. These might include the PTA/PTO, other parent organizations, the teachers' union, the administrators at the school, school board members, and local groups active in the community. Following the distribution of the Action Plan draft, the Team might schedule a school/family/community meeting, to discuss the draft. The suggestions offered by those at the meeting should be carefully considered by the Action Team, and included in the final report, as appropriate.

A publicity plan should also be prepared, to introduce the new family-school partnership initiative to those at the school, at home, and in the community who have not been part of the process of developing the Action Plan. A press release could be distributed to the newspapers in the community, local radio or tv stations, and to all the community organizations with an interest in education and the schools. Reach out to journalism teachers and students, local organizations, or news reporters covering education issues for help in drafting a plan and reaching the media.

Implementing and Evaluating the Action Plan

1. Forming a Parent Involvement Task Force and Adopting Procedures for Operation

At the end of Chapter 8, we recommended the formation of a Family-School Partnership Task Force, which would have major responsibility for implementing the Action Plan. In this chapter, we suggest a series of activities for the Task Force, which local school communities can adapt as appropriate to their settings.

The first step is for the Task Force to meet and begin to establish procedures for their operation. They must decide how often to meet, where to meet, and who will chair the meetings. They also need to come to agreement about officers for the group and committees to carry out various components of the Action Plan. Subcommittees could be assigned responsibility for activities covered in each section of the *Taking Stock* questionnaires. Or they could be designated to handle such areas as Communication, Outreach, Curriculum, Staff Development, Volunteer Programs, Evaluation and other issues related to family involvement.

In most schools, the principal will be a key member of the Task Force on Family-School Partnership Involvement. Because the principal has major responsibilities for all aspects of school operation, it might be more effective for a person in less demand to serve as the leader of the team. However the Task Force is organized, the principal will be central to many of the decisions to be made: whether resources are available to deploy additional staff for implementation of new activities, what opportunities exist for parents to have a voice in school management decisions, and how staff training and development can be scheduled into the planning for the year.

Meetings of the Task Force should be scheduled monthly, with the various committees meeting more often as needed. Efforts should be made to inform all participants in the school community about these meetings. They should be open to the public, and all interested parties should be encouraged to come and to participate. As more teachers, families, and community leaders express interest in and support for the Action Plan, there should be a mechanism for recruiting them to serve on the ongoing subcommittees.

2. Staff to Implement the Action Plan

An early decision of the Task Force will be whether additional staff are needed to assist with the implementation of the Action Plan. Many schools have found a parent coordinator or parent liaison to be a key figure in carrying out the ideas included in the Action Plan. The person for this job should be well known and respected both by the school and the community, have strong interpersonal social skills, possess the ability to interact with and represent both the community and the school, and be committed to strong school-community relations and the power of parent involvement.

If it is not possible to bring on a staff person, the Task Force will need to name those educators and parents who will oversee the various components given priority for implementation. To help keep track of

the Task Force work, subcommittees or other groups charged with implementing parts of the plan should write brief progress reports four times a year.

3. Staff Training and Development

Another activity for the Task Force is to help design staff training, to enable teachers and administrators to understand the Action Plan, and to learn techniques and skills for the tasks in which they are to be involved. A key factor, mentioned many times in the "Steps to Success" sheets, is the attitude of teachers and administrators. The best way to change attitudes is to provide effective training for those being asked to change the way they approach parents or to add some new activity to their already full schedule.

Some schools schedule a one-or two-day retreat, before the opening of school, for teachers, parents, administrators, and community leaders to meet, discuss issues of mutual concern, and begin to lay the framework for collaboration. Such a retreat is an excellent occasion for sharing the Family School Partnership Action Plan with representatives of the whole school community.

Particularly important is to demonstrate to the teachers the ways that greater parent involvement will improve the quality of the school and ultimately make their jobs easier and more effective. Too often, teachers consider the requirements of increased parent involvement to be another task which will take already scarce time and energy. Effective staff development can help convince teachers and administrators that even if family involvement efforts require more time initially, they will pay off in the long run with greater community support of the schools and their teachers.

4. Publicity, Visibility, Public Relations

As the subcommittees begin to see some results from their efforts, they will report back to the Task Force, which should be looking for opportunities to publicize the partnership efforts. They will want to keep the school board informed, be in touch with teachers through faculty meetings and the teachers' union, and convey successes to the PTA and other parent groups. One committee could be in charge of public relations, to make sure that the good news is distributed to the local news media.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation is a critical and integral part of a successful family-school partnership program. It may seem premature to talk about evaluation and assessment before the program is fully implemented, but there are definite benefits to addressing this issue early. One key aspect of designing an Action Plan is to identify the desired outcomes. Some will be concrete and measurable, others will be reflected in changed attitudes and practices. Worksheet 8-B, included in Chapter 8, provides a space for listing desired outcomes.

Two types of evaluation can be considered to document the successes and weaknesses of family involvement programs. One is "process" evaluation, which refers to whether the component, project, or activity has been implemented as designed in the Action Plan, and whether it is operating efficiently and in a timely manner. These questions should be addressed by the staff person assigned to oversee the program or by the Committees in their reports to the Parent Involvement Task Force.

The second type of evaluation is the "outcomes" evaluation, which addresses questions of how well the program's goals and objectives are being met and what are the effects of the program on the participants. Data for this part of the evaluation would not be collected until the program has been in operation for some time. The end of each school year would be an appropriate time to undertake the outcomes evaluation.

In considering the outcomes, the Evaluation Committee might look at three levels. **The first level** includes questions such as whether the number of parents participating in the various school activities has increased and whether school communications have been translated into other languages.

A **second level** concerns any changes noted in attitudes and practices. This could be examined from at least three viewpoints: families, teachers, and administrators. This would include such things as whether teachers feel more positive about working more closely with families, for example sending home learning assignments for parents to work on with their child. Or whether parents seem to have gained self-confidence and feel more empowered, so that, for example, they bring up problems their child may be having in school, or suggest changes in school practices. Or whether administrators are making more effort to consult with parents about retention, placement, and discipline decisions affecting their child.

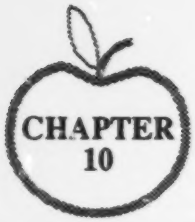
The **third level** will be to look at some factors further removed from the family involvement activities themselves. These might include an assessment of whether the parent involvement programs have resulted in improved student achievement, a decline in student absenteeism, or reduced instances of vandalism or disruption.

These three levels have different timelines as well. Parent visits to the school and participation in PTA or other activities can be measured as the school year progresses. Attitudes and practices can also be monitored throughout the year and might be documented as examples of success. An improvement in student performance, however, might not be evident for a few years, although an improvement in attendance might be noted and measured over a period of months. Local colleges and universities are often excellent sources of help for such evaluations; they make interesting class or graduate student projects.

A built-in evaluation process will provide information that can be used to modify or adapt program operations, justify program continuation and expansion, and generate reports that may be used for public relations purposes. This type of information can also be used to support budget requests, or be incorporated into proposals to foundations, corporations, and organizations to request support for family-school partnership programs.

As the components of the Action Plan are implemented, their progress should be reported to the Family-School Partnership Task Force on a regular schedule. Included in these reports might be the number of people attending various events, information about the kind of communications that have been distributed to parents, (together with anecdotal descriptions of the interactions between parents and teachers), examples of collaboration and empowerment, and other experiences encountered. The Evaluation Committee might also begin to collect data from the school on test scores, student grades, other measures of student achievement, attendance information, dropout rates, and information about the incidence of disciplinary actions for student misbehavior.

At the end of a two-year period, the Committee might want to consider administering *Taking Stock* again, to the teachers, administrators, and parents in the school at that time. A comparison of the results of the two surveys will be a good indication of whether the Action Plan is achieving its goals and objectives.



Moving Beyond Barriers: Steps to Success

Taking Stock is designed to collect responses from the community to assess the performance of the school on a number of important issues related to family/community involvement. In an ideal world, a school would automatically establish a partnership with every family whose children attend. But in the real world, most schools, even the best intentioned, have a limited set of policies and practices, which are not likely to be sensitive to the cultural, economic and social diversity of the entire school population today.

Despite all the encouraging rhetoric about "inviting parents in" and "opening up the once-shut doors," many parents are not convinced that schools really want them to be a vital part of their enterprise. For many educators, parents are people to be called on when something needs to be done or when something has gone wrong. Children, not families, are seen as the school's natural constituency. Initiatives to engage parents in the daily life of the school and in children's schooling are often viewed as inappropriate or unreasonable. Although rarely spoken, these attitudes create a climate that keeps parents away and perpetuates the invisible wall that separates a school from the community it serves. We hope that *Taking Stock* will help a school confront and challenge them.

In this chapter, we try to identify some of the attitudes, conditions, and constraints which can act as obstacles to establishing a collaborative, congenial school-family partnership. As administrators, teachers, and parents begin to design and implement an Action Plan to improve and strengthen parent involvement policies and practices, the examples and suggestions offered here may be helpful in working through these issues.

This chapter represents an effort not only to identify, define, and confront the barriers to greater family involvement, but also to move beyond them to suggestions and steps toward success. We have prepared at least one page, which we call "Steps to Success," on every question in the inventory. It includes lists of barriers, dos and don'ts, tips for successful action, and suggestions for what parents can do. The pages are designed so that they can be used independently of this manual. We hope that the Action Team will make multiple copies for their members or for other committees or groups designing activities to strengthen family involvement in the school.

Several questions are covered by more than one "Steps to Success" sheet:

- Question #1, on the topic of Open Communications, includes a separate sheet on parent access to student records.
- Question #2, refers to families from different language and cultural backgrounds. Four "Steps to Success" sheets have been prepared to address this question as it applies to: African-American families, Hispanic families, Asian-American families, and immigrant families.
- Question #4, addressing how to reach uninvolved parents, includes a separate page on efforts to involve fathers and other significant males.

- Question #5, on welcoming parents to the school building, has a second sheet on establishing a Parent Center.
- Questions #8 and #9, on the effectiveness of parent organizations in the school, are divided into two sections, one on the PTA/PTO and the other on separate, independent parent groups.
- Question #12, parent/teacher partnerships, includes a separate page on parent/teacher conferences.
- After Question #20, two extra Steps to Success sheets are included: one on parent involvement at the middle school and the other at the high school level.

For suggestions about additional resources, including books, materials, reports, services and organizations, see Section V, Bibliography and Resources.

QUESTION #1: Does The School Communicate Openly and Frequently with Families?

Section A: Open Communications

What is "open communication?" Schools often feel they have fulfilled their responsibility when families have been told what educators feel they need to know to ensure that the school's agenda runs smoothly. All too often, parents are treated like students -- communication consists mainly of instructions and it is decidedly one way. If parents are to be fully engaged partners in their children's education, they need to understand how the school works and how to become more active in the life of the school. Their views and opinions need to be heard. Remember, in many cases, parents hear from school only when there is bad news.

Tips for Creating an Atmosphere of Open Communication

- Designate a staff person or parent whose primary responsibility is to communicate with families and coordinate school/family activities.
- Send frequent and friendly written communications home (for example, copies of the school mission, welcoming message from the principal and staff, copies of the school song and profiles of school traditions). Have students design graphics for use in the newsletters and fliers, and credit the art work.
- Invite comments and suggestions for making the school a better place for kids (place a suggestion box in the front office, a community center, and nearby religious organizations). Make sure the comments are collected regularly and turned over to someone whose responsibility it is to respond.
- Send reprints of articles (tip: enlarge for easy reading) that may be of special interest to families (for example: community profiles, people doing outstanding work for the community, or special achievements of young people).
- Encourage parents and students to contribute regularly to the school newsletter (a parent's column, for instance).
- Train clerical staff to be more helpful and knowledgeable in assisting parents who call the school for information.
- Organize staff development activities to enhance communications (e.g. parent-teacher conference, class newsletter, weekly program reports).

- Design the school handbook to address parent concerns specifically. The handbook should include:

  - A policy statement on parent involvement
  - Information about the structure of the school, staff positions and organizational charts
  - Information about parents' and students' rights
  - Suggestions for ways parents can be more involved in the school
  - A glossary of educational terms
  - A directory of helpful numbers to call for special assistance.

Ways to Improve Written Communication

- Avoid stilted, formal language (e.g., It is hoped that all parents will be benefitted by our endeavors to...") and translate education jargon into plain language.

- Remember that poor-quality copies are difficult to read.

- Choose graphics that convey positive cultural images (avoid figures with huge sombreros, for example, or other exaggerations of ethnic clothing, caricatures with features and hair texture associated with certain ethnic stereotypes).

- Use drawings and photographs of people that depict the ethnic diversity of the school's community.

- Provide a telephone number parents can call for further information. Make sure it is answered by someone who is knowledgeable about the school's daily operations, special projects and events.

What Parents Can Do to Improve Communication between Home and School

- Read all correspondence from the school -- if you find the information vague or incomplete, ask for clarification.

- Provide feedback on the quality of written communications you receive from the school. Let the school know if copies are difficult to read, language is confusing or too technical, or instructions are unclear.

- Don't hesitate to suggest ways to make information from the school more usable for you. For example, if you are visually impaired, ask for an alternative way for information to be shared with you such as audio cassettes, phone calls, or home visits.

- Volunteer to work on the school newsletter: contribute articles, information about community events, recipes and tips of interest to parents.

Section B: Access to School Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law, gives parents the right to examine their child's school records, to challenge and correct inaccurate information, and to restrict release of the records.

Information in a school record can assist parents in monitoring their children's progress in school, in reviewing the accuracy of information kept in the file, and in learning what problems the children may be having.

Barriers to Parental Access to School Records

- Parents often are uninformed about their rights. They may feel that student records are the property of the school, or that they will be seen as "troublemakers" for asking to see the files.
- School officials and parents are not familiar with federal law concerning parent access to student records.
- Schools may not provide adequate information about the federal law and the procedures parents should use to review school records.
- Parents may not understand some of the material in the records, such as test scores; and they may not realize that they have the right to an explanation.
- Information on parent access to student records is available only in English, not in the primary languages of families in the school.

What the Federal Law Says about Parents' Rights of Access to School Records

- Parents have the right to see *all* information kept on their child, including test results, reports of disciplinary problems, and evaluations and comments by teachers which are placed in the file.
- Parents also have the right to challenge information in the record which they believe to be inaccurate, misleading, discriminatory, or a violation of the family's privacy.
- Student records cannot be released to individuals or organizations outside of the school without parental permission.

How Teachers and Administrators Can Facilitate Parent Access to School Records

- Notify parents each year of their rights to examine their child's school records; this applies to the non-custodial parent as well as the parent with whom the child lives. Inform them:
  - What information is in the records
  - Where the records are kept
  - How to make an appointment to see the records
  - Whether they may have copies made of the records.
- Provide the necessary information in a convenient form such as a parent handbook, a newsletter, or a special mailing to the home. Parents' rights and school responsibilities should be translated into the primary languages of the families at the school.
- Inform parents where all parts of their child's school record are located, and offer to explain anything they do not understand. Make sure they know that a record may not always be written on paper, but may also be in computer records or on microfiche.
- At parent/teacher conferences, go over the child's file with parents, and explain it to them. Encourage them to come to school to look at it at least once every year.
- If parents speak limited English or may have difficulty reading the records, suggest that the parent liaison at the school, a community leader, or an advocate come with them to review the records.
- Suggest to parents that reviewing the record is a good idea, and try to comply with their requests within a few days. Offer to make copies of anything in the record which they would like to take home.

What Parents Can Do to Review Their Child's School Records

- Make an appointment with the principal to review the child's school records, at least once a year.
- Request that records be revised or removed from the file if the information is inaccurate, misleading, discriminatory, or an invasion of privacy.
- Inform the principal that you are familiar with the federal law and want to be sure the school is following it.

QUESTION #2: Does the School Make Special Efforts to Reach Families from All Racial, Cultural, and Language Groups in Your Community?

Section A: Involvement of African-American Families

Discrimination, social injustice, and economic depression resulting in chronic joblessness, underemployment and disenfranchisement have, over generations, degraded the quality of life for many Black families. These realities diminish parent confidence in the commitment of the public school system to quality education and equal opportunity for *all* students.

Though parents believe in the importance of a good education for their children, many have difficulty believing that their increased involvement will lead to positive changes. Schools must make special efforts to acknowledge and encourage African-American parents' belief in education public and to affirm that their contribution to their children's education is valued by the school.

Barriers to Involvement of African-American Parents

Communication Barriers

Although the native language of African-Americans is English, Black English is perceived as improper or ungrammatical. Black English is an important aspect of African-American cultural expression, even among well-educated, affluent Blacks. Many African-Americans consider themselves bilingual; they speak "the dialect" as well as standard English, often referring to standard English as the language of survival and Black English as the language of the soul.

- African-American children and their families often are seen as unintelligent because of the way they dress or express themselves. Stereotypes about Black culture hinder communication and cooperation between school staff and Black families.

- Intonations, body language and voice level are sometimes interpreted by educators as threatening or adversarial, when in actuality, these are totally acceptable characteristics of expression within the African-American community.

- Apprehension and discomfort when encountering African-American males impair communication with Black fathers and other significant males. Inability to recognize the many configurations of successful African-American families can greatly diminish the school's ability to communicate effectively.

Tradition/Cultural Differences

Traditionally, there is a deep and abiding belief in the importance of education and respect for those who teach, fostering the belief that education is best left to the professionals. Many parents view their role as supportive and cooperative but shy away from more assertive strategies for becoming involved.

Lack of Information about How Schools Work

Many parents feel intimidated by the literature which explains the structure of schools, educational objectives, and strategies for school improvement. Much of this information is difficult to read and understand especially for parents with low reading ability. The oral tradition of passing on information among natural networks of friends and family, prevalent in the African-American community, can be tapped by schools as an effective way to transmit important information to families.

What Schools Can Do to Reach Out to African-American Families

- Invite African-American leadership to the school to speak to parents and staff. Consult parents in planning culturally appealing events for families.
- Arrange home visits (especially for parents without phones), and call parents who are not able to come to the school. Make special efforts to accommodate families with pressing survival needs that make involvement difficult.
- Solicit the help of Black organizations, churches, businesses and social clubs to promote family involvement in the school.

What African-American Parents Can Do to Become More Involved

- Form a focus group to discuss special topics and concerns.
- Talk with the principal about the school's family involvement activities and suggest ways the school can be more responsive to the needs of African-American parents.
- Contact organizations (national and local) with an African-American focus for materials, speakers and advice on improving academic achievement for Black children.
- Attend school board meetings and other decision-making forums to ensure Black family representation.

Section B: Involvement of Hispanic Families

Regardless of ethnic group, socioeconomic status or educational background, parents are a key resource in their children's education. The school must make a special effort to involve Hispanic parents, by being sensitive to their values and traditions, and designing programs responsive to their concerns.

Barriers to Involvement of Hispanics Parents

- The lack of Spanish-speaking staff in the schools makes it difficult for parents to get involved.
- When English is a second language, parents may need assistance to communicate with the teacher, participate in school and parent activities, and help their children with homework.
- Hispanic tradition differs from Anglo-American in that Latino parents tend to believe that educators and the school system have primary responsibility for children's education. Because teachers are the professionals, parents respect their opinions and are reluctant to question them. Hispanic parents may also have feelings of self-consciousness because of their unfamiliarity with the U.S. public school system.
- Information is not always available in a language they can understand, about such topics as:
  - the U.S. public school system
  - school registration procedure, the school calendar and daily schedule, the transportation system
  - school policies, curriculum, special programs and expectations for student behavior and performance
  - parents' rights in education.
- Some schools have no clear policies to attract and involve Hispanic parents.

Tips for Schools to Increase Involvement of Hispanic Parents

- Have basic information about the school available in Spanish.
- Hire Hispanic teacher aides for the classroom and arrange for child care, transportation, and interpreters for school activities.
- Plan social activities for families -- dances, potluck dinners, and graduation ceremonies for example. Extend invitations to whole families, with a special welcome to grandparents.
- Furnish the Parent Center at the school with information, applications and forms, such as:
  - Driver's license applications
  - Food Stamp application forms
  - Tax forms
  - Voter registration cards
  - Directories of community services

- Schedule conferences and meetings with consideration for parents' availability and work schedules. Working parents cannot attend daytime activities; Hispanic women are not available when it is time to feed their families.

- Inform school personnel about the Hispanic community, its culture, and its special needs.

- Talk *with* parents, not at them. Compliment parents on their child's behavior and performance. Praise them for their cultural values, such as strong family loyalty. Welcome their questions.

- Encourage Spanish-speaking parent support groups, led by parents. They can provide Hispanic parents with an opportunity to express criticisms and complaints, and empower them to be advocates for their children and learn to deal with school personnel, policies, and practices.

- Provide opportunities for parents to share information about their culture, country, and traditions in the classroom. Plan curriculum to include material on Latino history, politics, music and art.

What Hispanic Parents Can Do to Become More Involved

- Learn about the public school system in the U.S. and what is expected of parents.

- Establish a relationship with your child's teacher and communicate your support for education and your commitment to your child's success in school. Communicate frequently with teachers about your child's performance and behavior.

- Request a translator to attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings, if necessary. Ask that material from the school be translated for parents not fluent in English.

- Review all school information carefully. Ask questions if it is not clear.

Section C: Involvement of Asian-American Parents

The remarkable educational achievement of some Asian-American children, even though positive, has some adverse effects. It may distract educators from the fact that many Asian-Americans, particularly recent immigrants, need language assistance programs. It may also exact a high price in the form of pressure and anxiety on individual students.

Asian-Americans are socialized to feel tremendous respect for the teachers and for the school system. They are very supportive of education and play a crucial role in encouraging their children at home, while maintaining a distance from the school. Educators may assume that because Asian-American parents do not readily come to the school building, they are unconcerned.

Barriers to Parent Involvement

- Asian-American families tend to believe that:
  - Education is a privilege, not a right
  - Educators are experts, to be treated with great respect, even reverence
  - Schools should teach proper social behavior (as defined by their culture)--such as following rules and studying hard
  - The place for parent involvement is at home, not at school.
- Cultural and language differences can result in lack of understanding of U.S. public schools.
  - Limited educational background results in feelings of inadequacy
  - Families often have to rely on children to facilitate communication, which puts parents in an awkward position.

Tips for Teachers and Administrators

- Treat parents with respect. Recognize that Asian-American parents provide strong support for their children's education at home, even though they may appear reluctant to come to the school.
- Translate information on school affairs and school policies. Keep written communications brief and to the point.
- Make meetings and parent classes interesting and relevant to Asian-American parents. Deal with topics that address their needs and concerns. Contact appropriate district or community resource people to help with planning.
- Provide interpreters for conferences. It is preferable to have a community aide who is familiar with the school setting and can communicate the ideas of both parties. Community aides can also assist school staff in addressing issues in a culturally sensitive manner and inviting parents to meetings or the classroom.

- Use conferences as an opportunity to explain to parents more about the American school system and the part they can play in their children's education.

- Create a variety of roles for parents in the school. Define parent involvement to include the strong support given by Asian-American parents at home. Do not push parents to participate in ways for which they are not prepared.

- Offer inservice training for teachers, counselors, and support personnel to raise awareness of cultural differences.

- Provide resources for school personnel to help them understand cultural differences. Include topics on Asian-American history, culture, values, and current events in the curriculum.

What Parents Can Do to Become More Involved

- Learn about the public school system in the U.S. and what is expected of parents.

- Establish a relationship with your child's teacher. Convey the message that you support education and are committed to your child's success in school.

- Request a translator or interpreter to attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings, if necessary. Ask that school material be translated for parents not fluent in English.

Section D: Involvement of Immigrant Parents or Those with Limited English Proficiency

Many immigrant and migrant worker families are unfamiliar with the school system in the United States, uninformed about their rights, and reluctant to become involved because of their limited English and/or their legal status. School officials must be especially sensitive to the emotional, economic, and legal stresses on these families. Children from immigrant families, even those who are undocumented, are entitled to education in the public schools. Educators can assist parents to feel more comfortable with the educational system if they welcome all students unconditionally and provide them with adequate assistance to learn English.

Barriers to Involvement of Immigrant Parents

- Parents who are new arrivals to the United States or whose English is limited lack sufficient information about the public school structure, policies, and practices.
- Most information from the school is prepared in English.
- Parents from other cultures tend to consider educators as professionals and experts and feel it is inappropriate to question actions taken by the school.
- Families who have entered the United States as "undocumented" may be reluctant to become involved because of their uncertain status.

Tips for Teachers and Administrators

- Welcome all families without questions about immigration status or identification papers, birth certificate, or social security numbers.
- Find ways to communicate with parents to learn about their children's educational background.
- Recruit volunteers to promote communication with parents who don't speak English. Make sure that the children are placed in a classroom appropriate to their age, grade level and abilities, and encourage them to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Prepare all information and messages sent home in the parents' native languages.
- Administer tests that are relatively free of cultural bias and in the primary language of the immigrant student to determine placement at grade level or in a language assistance program. Place students in special education classrooms only when there is a disability and not because of limited English.
- Inform parents, in their primary language, why their child needs a language assistance program, the nature of the program, available alternative programs, their right to refuse participation in the program, and the procedures for leaving the program.

- Learn about cultural differences in attitudes, styles and practices related to education and the school in order to avoid practices that alienate culturally different parents.

- Offer ESL classes or family literacy programs.

What Parents Can Do to Become More Involved

- Become informed about the language assistance programs offered by the school. If your children enroll in such a program, monitor their progress and make sure the program is achieving its educational objectives.

- Request a translator from the school for parent/teacher conferences, meetings with the principal, or for any communication between parents and school.

- Contact other parents newly arrived in the United States and organize a support group. Get in touch with community organizations serving your particular language or ethnic group, for help and support.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #3: Does the School Make Special Efforts to Reach Working and Single Parents?

One-parent families comprise one-fourth of all families with children under age 18. About half of all children will live in one-parent families some time during their school years. About 75% of mothers of school-age children are in the labor force, either full time or part time.

Most parents want to be involved in their children's education. When single parents provide adequate supervision and parenting, and are involved in and supportive of education, their children achieve at a level comparable to those from families with two parents. It is the behavior of the parent that matters, not the family structure.

Barriers to Involvement of Single and Working Parents

- Especially hectic schedules may mean the parent often is unavailable for meetings.
- As a sole provider, single parents may have limited resources needed to participate in school activities (money, transportation, child care, for example).
- School personnel may unfairly stereotype single-parent families.

Tips for Schools to Enhance Involvement of Working Parents or Single Parents

- Schedule parent/teacher conferences and other activities at night or on weekends.
- Encourage parent support groups for single and working parents.
- Arrange for before-or after-school homework sessions. Establish a homework help line.
- Work with community groups to sponsor activities for children after school and on school holidays. Arrange for at least one school to be open when other schools are closed for snow days.
- Provide child care during school activities.
- Establish a car pool network with parent volunteers to transport children who would otherwise not be able to participate in after-school activities.
- Provide sliding-fee scale or other help for children who cannot pay the usual fees for field trips, athletic events, and special supplies.

- Provide a resource center for parents including information about community resources, support groups, babysitting, day care, counseling, and recreation.
- Be sensitive about scheduling school events that are traditionally geared to "Moms only" or "Dads only."

What Schools Can Do to Encourage Involvement of Divorced, Separated, or Noncustodial Parents

- Hold separate conferences for both parents, if requested.
- Send report cards to both parents, whether or not they are living with the child.
- Make sure curriculum units on the family reflect single-parent families, extended families, and other family structures.
- Inform divorced parents of their rights to equal access to their child's school records.

What Parents Can Do to Become More Involved

- Make a point of informing the child's teacher that even though you work during school hours, you are interested in your child's education and will make every effort to be involved.
- Inform your child's teacher of your work schedule so that conferences can be planned for a mutually convenient time. Arrange to talk by phone when face-to-face contact is not feasible.
- The teacher, principal, and PTA/PTO officials should be informed that you will attend school events whenever possible. Single or working parents can offer to do volunteer activities occasionally, especially those which can be done in the evening or on weekends.
- Form a parent support group for single and working parents, to discuss parenting issues and common school problems.
- Speak to the principal if you encounter negative attitudes in some school personnel toward "broken" homes and divorced parents.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #4: Does The School Reach Out to Parents Who Are Less Involved?

Section A: Strengthening Outreach

Low family turnout to school-sponsored events is a common problem. Many parents feel that attending meetings is not the best use of their limited energy and time. Parents may also be put off by the formality of meetings or feel they do not offer a forum for parents to address the issues most important to them. Sometimes the school is not convenient to reach without special transportation. Furthermore, coming to the school may awaken unpleasant memories of problems involving their children or their own school experiences. **Keep in mind, meeting attendance is not the only way to measure success.**

Tips for Increasing Parent Attendance at School-Sponsored Events

- Hold meetings and events in churches or the facilities of organizations that are active and involved in the community. Invite clergy, community leaders, and politicians.
- Provide a low-cost or pot-luck meal so that families don't have to eat first, and to make people feel welcome.
- Provide activities for younger children, so that families don't have to find sitters.
- Recruit parents through other organizations with which families interact regularly, such as food cooperatives, day care centers, recreational facilities, and community centers.
- Enlist students to recruit parents and have students perform at meetings.
- Plan and co-sponsor meetings that address community issues--family survival, community building, environmental conditions. This sends the message that the school is committed to improving the quality of life for its students and families.

What Schools Can Do to Strengthen Parent-to-Parent Outreach

Parents make excellent partners in reaching out to other parents who find it difficult to participate in school activities. Parent recruiters are key to forming partnerships with families in ways that do not necessarily rely on a head count at an event to prove success.

Word of mouth can be the most effective public relations tool for a school. If a few parents attend school-sponsored family events and find them interesting and useful, word will spread. Gradually other parents will take a chance and come out to future events.

- Set up a system such as a telephone tree that allows parents to contact each other in an organized and consistent way.

- Establish a parent visitor program, where parent aides are trained to make regular home visits to students' families.
- Offer incentives for parents to bring other parents and family members to school-sponsored events (e.g. stipends for outreach planning and activity, lunch for parent outreach volunteers, and appreciation events and certificates.)
- Build family outreach into the volunteer program. Provide training and support for parents working to recruit more families.
- Involve the community in supporting and encouraging parent-to-parent outreach activities.
- Consult parents about the best ways to increase the level of parent participation in school; convene groups of parents to design a plan and to help plan parent activities.

What Parents Can Do to Reach Other Parents

- Request a meeting with the principal and the parent/teacher organization leadership to explore ways to recruit more parents. Conduct a drive to contact personally each family in the school.
- Place information about school-related gatherings and recruitment efforts in the bulletins of your religious organizations or other affiliations, and post them in places where you shop, do laundry or attend other community functions.
- Host small groups of parents in your home to discuss school matters and explore ways to reach out effectively to other parents. Rotate meeting sites with other parents.
- Get to know the parents of your children's playmates and friends and talk with them about school. Ask them for help to plan the school's parent involvement activities.
- Establish a parent-to-parent newsletter, written by and for parents, to keep all families fully informed and involved in the life of the school.

Section B: Special Efforts to Involve Fathers and Other Males

Fathers are assuming a greater caretaking role and would like to be more active in their children's daily school life. In their attempt to make meetings and other gatherings more attractive to parents, schools often tend to plan events that appeal primarily to women, such as fashion shows and bake sales. Perceptions that involvement in education is "women's work" may actually be reinforced by the schools.

Fathers and other male family members might be more likely to be involved if they could participate in activities with other men on active tasks, rather than social events or meetings.

Suggestions for Activities for Fathers and Other Males

- Invite men to participate in projects scheduled for evenings or weekends, where they can use special skills, such as building playground equipment, overseeing sports events, or painting a classroom.
- Sponsor a Family Breakfast which fathers are encouraged to attend with their children before going to work.
- Invite fathers to their child's classroom to talk about their job.
- Hold a special "men's" event for fathers, uncles, grandfathers, and mentors, to encourage male participation in the school.
- Invite fathers to explore traditionally female roles--classroom aide, tutor, chaperon, PTA/PTO officer. Use men to recruit other men.

What Schools Can Do to Encourage Fathers to Participate

- Encourage male teachers to take a more active role in parent volunteer recruitment and PTA/PTO activities.
- Offer heartier foods, not just "tea party" snacks.
- Provide a place on the student emergency card for the name of the non-custodial parent and other significant males in a child's life.
- Display photographs and art depicting fathers in the school setting.
- Have a "Fathers" column in the school newsletter. Ask fathers to share ways to become more influential in their children's school.
- Schedule "family conferences" for the teacher, both parents, and the child.

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Steps to Success

QUESTION #5: Does the School Welcome Parents and Family Members into the Building?

Section A: Making the School a Welcoming, Friendly, and Safe Place

Because parent visits to school so often involve a problem, many parents tend to view a trip to the school as a negative experience. Warning signs posted to discourage trespassers can reinforce feelings of being out of place, as can a school secretary who is visibly annoyed by the "interruption" of a visiting parent. When a parent enters a building that is bright, affirming and welcoming, many of the initial apprehensions will fade.

Tips for Schools to Make the Building More Attractive and Friendly

- A message of welcome, and one of thanks, should accompany notices instructing parents to report to the office.
- Directions to the office should be clear, highly visible and in the language(s) spoken by the school community.
- Ask students to make signs and decorations for the reception area.
- Reserve a special section of the parking lot for parents (*not* the spot behind the dumpster).
- Sponsor a school-wide "facelift" (tidy up, display plants and posters); invite parents to come and have a look around.
- Ask parents frequently if they enjoy visiting the school; provide a suggestion box for ways to improve the school climate.
- Walls filled with posters carrying prohibitive messages about drugs, alcohol and sex make the school seem like a place beset with problems. Colorful displays of student accomplishments and positive messages inspire and assure families that the school believes in its students and has high expectations for them.

What Schools Can Do to Involve Parents in Making the School a Safe Place

- Parents will feel more comfortable if the school is a safe, pleasant place to be. Involving parents in school safety will increase parent participation in the daily life of the school.
- Recruit parents, especially fathers, to spend time in the school's lunchroom, halls and grounds.
- Hold safety workshops for families; invite law enforcement officers to provide practical tips for keeping kids safe.
- Encourage parents to call the school (anonymously if they wish) to report unsafe situations they notice in and around the school.

What Parents Can Do to Make the School More Inviting

- Volunteer time to be in the building, monitor halls, or chaperone special events. Your presence makes an importance difference.
- Donate crafts, art work, plants, etc. to beautify the school. Create a parent-sponsored school beautification drive.
- Voice your concerns about the physical condition of the school and the way parents are treated when they visit the building. Create a wish list for needed improvements, and present it to the principal with signatures.
- Form a parent/student safety committee. Ask students about their safety concerns and take your findings to the principal.

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Section B: Establishing a Parent Center

Parent centers, which are becoming prevalent in schools at all levels, provide a place in the school where family members can be comfortable. How parent centers function differs from school to school. Most important is that parents have a role in designing the center, deciding what resources will be available and what activities will take place. In some cases, parent centers take on the atmosphere of a lounge, where parents come and relax, or meet and chat with each other. Other parent centers may be more focussed on education, with a resource library and structured activities to help parents assist their children's development, and adult education classes for parents.

Parent centers let parents know they are welcome in the school and give them a sense of belonging and ownership. A parent center can also be a resource to help parents improve their children's academic achievement. However the school staff feels about the purpose of such a center, the final decisions should lie with parents. After all, how they feel about the center's usefulness to them personally will determine how frequently it is used.

Reasons for a Parent Center

- Allows informal person-to-person contact between parents and teachers.
- Gives parents an opportunity to meet other parents.
- May offer adult education, literacy courses, GED or ESL classes for parents.
- Serves as a referral center for social services, housing and health agencies.

What Schools Can Do To Establish a Parent Center

- Select, if possible, a room that is close to the main reception area of the school, or that at least is not in a remote part of the building.
- The room should be well lit, with good climate control. Make sure it is clean and well maintained. If it must be kept locked, make sure keys are easily available.
- Parents should select furniture and decorations. Solicit donations of "adult" furniture that is comfortable and attractive.
- Provide a refrigerator, microwave and coffee maker. If possible, add a sewing machine and a typewriter or word processor. (Local businesses often make such donations).
- Make school audio visual equipment available to parents (for example a VCR, movie projector, etc.).
- Do not allow staff to borrow parent room furniture and equipment or use the room without the consent of parents.

What Parents Can Do to Establish a Parent Center

- If there is not a parent center in your school, encourage the principal to designate a room and resources.
- Form a parent center committee to monitor the use and maintenance of the room, select materials, and plan events.
- Volunteer to organize events in the parent room (videos, speakers, tax assistance, baby clothing exchange etc.).
- Clip interesting articles, recipes, tips of interest to other parents for the bulletin board. Suggest ways to make the parent center a place parents use.
- Use the parent room frequently. Drop in whenever you come to the school. Make it clear to school staff that you consider the parent room a valuable resource.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #6: Are the School and Its Staff Open and Available to Parents?

If parents are to become partners in their children's education, the school must be welcoming and friendly. The staff must communicate that the school views parents as partners and values their presence and their contributions.

Parents have a right to know what is happening during a typical class session at their school. School districts committed to increasing parent involvement are not threatened by parent requests to observe in the classroom and other parts of the school. They recognize that parents both need and have the right to follow their child's progress in school.

Barriers to School and Staff Availability

- Parents may feel unwelcome at school, if they can visit the classroom only for short periods at certain, restricted times of the year.
- Teachers may feel threatened by parent visitors, or fear that the presence of parents in the classroom might be disruptive.
- Teachers and administrators may appear to favor certain parents over others.
- Principals are concerned about the security problems associated with allowing strangers easy access to the school.
- Teachers feel overworked and their schedules are too busy to allow time for phone calls to or from parents.
- Families do not have telephones or transportation.

What Schools Can Do to Be More Open to Parents

- Form a committee to welcome new families to the school.
- Inform parents frequently that they are welcome to visit the classroom, library, cafeteria, playground. Inform staff as well, so that they are open and accepting of frequent visits.
- Establish a simple procedure for parents to schedule visits to the school or classroom. Suggest times when visits would be most convenient. Encourage parents to join their children for lunch.

- Establish a time each month when parents of particular grades can meet with the principal or with the teachers (a breakfast hour or late afternoon coffee break, for example).
- Inform parents of the most convenient time to call to talk with teachers, administrators, or guidance counselors.
- Encourage regular personal phone calls from teachers and/or administrative staff to parents, for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Train the school receptionist to answer parent calls in a friendly, positive manner and to be of assistance whenever possible.
- Install 24-hour telephone answering machine message recorders so parents can leave messages for teachers any time. Establish a policy stating that teachers will return phone calls within 48 hours.
- Encourage teachers to make home visits at the beginning of the year to families who do not have telephones. If the primary language of the home is not English, the teacher might take along a community leader or parent who is a member of the family's ethnic group and can serve as a translator.
- Encourage the use of the school building for after-school activities that involve local children and parents.

What Parents Can Do to Become Better Acquainted with the School

- Make an appointment with your child's teacher to visit the classroom at least once during the year -- more often if necessary.
- Take every opportunity to let school personnel know when they are doing a good job.
- Encourage the principal to inform all parents that they are welcome to visit the school.
- Maintain a positive relationship with the teacher by calling, writing notes, or stopping in at the school on the way to work.
- Propose that the school board adopt a policy confirming the right of parents to visit the school building and their child's classroom.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #7: Does the School Encourage Volunteer Participation from Families?

The contributions parents can make to the learning experiences of their children are endless. They are doctors, engineers, musicians, painters, philosophers, carpenters, plumbers, news reporters, and attorneys, each with special knowledge and skills that can be shared with young people. Parents can assist in the library and classroom, investigate field trip possibilities, serve as interpreters, and raise funds.

A volunteer program offers the chance for parents and citizens to become familiar with the school while providing meaningful support to children and staff. Volunteers can also do much to raise the level of student achievement in schools.

Barriers to Volunteer Efforts in the Schools

- Some teachers and administrators may think that parent volunteers take too much time to train and therefore are a hindrance in the classroom rather than a help.
- Teachers may feel that parents with limited English or with less educational background cannot be effective as volunteers.
- Some teachers are uncomfortable with parent volunteers, because of concerns that they'll be judged, analyzed, and monitored by visitors in the classroom.
- Parent volunteer programs often are designed for families with high education levels, where the mother is not employed outside the home. Teachers are most comfortable with parents who are similar in background and values to themselves.

Tips for School Personnel to Encourage Volunteer Programs

- Designate a volunteer coordinator who will survey teachers' needs and parents' skills, and try to match the two.
- Develop a comprehensive list of activities which can be performed by volunteers; send the list to parents and ask them to check what they might do.
- Try to call every parent who returns the list of suggested volunteer activities.
- Be sure the list includes volunteer tasks which can be done at home or in the school after school hours, to meet the needs of parents not available during the school day.
- Make sure the material sent to parents is available in the family's native language and includes activities to utilize the ethnic and cultural background of all parents.

- Publicize dates for events where volunteers are needed as early as possible so that parents can plan ahead.
- Schedule some volunteer activities for the middle of the day so working parents might participate on their lunch hour.
- Recognize and honor volunteers with awards, certificates, and special ceremonies. Saying "thanks" will go a long way to ensure continued participation.

What Parents Can Do to Encourage Volunteers

- Ask the principal if parents can assist in recruiting and training other parent volunteers.
- Form a committee to develop a list of volunteer activities, utilizing the many skills of parents with diverse backgrounds and accomodating busy work and home schedules.
- Conduct a survey of parents to identify their occupations, vocations, hobbies, skills; develop a list of expertise that parents can offer to the school and distribute it to teachers.

QUESTIONS #8 & 9: How Active and Strong Is the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTA/PTO)? What Are the PTA/PTO's Major Activities?

Section A: Strengthening the School's PTA/PTO

A strong parent/teacher organization must be responsive to the needs of all parents -- parents of successful students as well as those who need additional support. Parents should feel that all families share the goal of quality education for all students, and that parents of children doing well, and parents whose children's daily school life is a struggle, are regarded as equally important to the school.

Barriers to Parent Involvement in PTA/PTO

Families may feel excluded or discouraged if:

- The mission of the organization is not clearly defined and communicated to families in a format they understand.
- The PTA/PTO is organized primarily for social purposes or fund-raising, or serves as a "rubber stamp" for existing policies.
- PTA/PTO meetings are formal and rigidly structured, with little opportunity for parents to speak out and raise issues.
- Parents are not given the opportunity to change the format of meetings, write bylaws, or try alternative approaches that best suit families' lifestyles and needs.
- Meetings are scheduled during the school day or at times inconvenient for working parents and families with young children.
- The leadership of the PTA/PTO is chosen by the principal, a sign that it is part of a power structure from which many families feel excluded. If the principal also sets the agenda and conducts the meetings, this discourages discussion of controversial issues or questioning of curriculum, policies, and practices.
- Parents who are unable to attend meetings are not kept informed and their advice and opinions are not solicited.

Barriers to a Successfully Functioning PTA/PTO for Minority Families

- Issues and concerns addressed in meetings are not consistent with their cultural background, but instead are generated by teachers and administrators.
- The PTA/PTO is not a strong advocate for students and families, or ignores issues of equity, family survival, and racism.
- Leadership does not represent the economic, racial, and ethnic mix of the student population. Meetings are conducted exclusively in English; newsletters and other material are available only in English.

Tips for Building an Active and Strong Parent-Teacher Organization

- Schedule regular meetings. Even if attendance is low, parents need to know that meetings are held regularly.
- Plan special recruitment activities for parents of students who are not doing well. Plan a strategy to build a cohesive community of caring adults on behalf of *all* children rather than focussing on the negatives of poor achievement.
- Encourage discussion of controversial issues so that parents can be thoughtful and critical about all aspects of their children's education.
- Review and revise bylaws to make sure PTA/PTO officers are elected by the parents. Widely publicize and encourage full participation in the election of parent-teacher organization officers.
- Post in a highly visible place the goals of the PTA/PTO; keep the entire school community fully informed of progress toward those goals.
- Actively recruit teacher participation. Provide training for staff to become effective participants and supporters of parent organizations in the school.
- Recruit active parents of all racial/ethnic groups represented in the school to encourage other parents to participate. Let parents know that an interpreter will be present at PTA/PTO meetings for parents whose English is limited. Also make accommodation for parents who are hearing impaired or physically challenged.
- Be sure that information sent to parents is translated in the primary language of the family; include at least a page in the newsletter which is written in a language other than English.

Section B: Forming an Alternative Parents Organization

As parents become more comfortable with coming to the school, those who choose not to participate in the school's established PTA/PTO might consider new avenues to come together with other parents to form a school-oriented group. Parents have a fundamental right to organize to address their concerns. They do not need the permission of school officials, school board, or the state department of education in order to form a parents' group. Such a group can work closely with the PTA/PTO on certain issues, but may choose a different course of action on others.

Reasons to Form an Alternative Group

- The PTA/PTO is typically for parents and teachers, and often is run by the principal of the school; parents may want their own organization.
- The PTA/PTO may not serve parents from diverse backgrounds.
- The PTA/PTO may be organized to appeal to parents who are able to attend meetings and serve as volunteers during school hours.
- The parent group may wish to emphasize the rights and responsibilities of parents or to address an educational issue such as class size, tracking, or discipline problems.
- Parents from one ethnic, cultural, or language background may form a support group to become acquainted, share information, and learn strategies for effective parent action from those of a similar background. They may feel more comfortable speaking in their primary language and with other parents with similar experiences and concerns.

Steps to Take to Organize a Parent Group

- Form a core group of parents who have similar concerns.
- Agree on the purpose of the group and set some short- and long-term goals.
- Recruit more parents by telephoning neighbors and friends, talking to other parents at the school, or posting a notice in the newspaper or at a neighborhood meeting place.
- Gather information and data on the issue you are trying to influence, prepare a report, or sponsor a public event to present your issue.
- Invite community leadership such as business people, clergy and residents to participate in parent group activities. Expand membership to include all who have an interest in supporting school improvement efforts in the community.

How School Officials Can Assist Parent Groups

- Make the school available for meetings.
- Cooperate with representatives of parent groups seeking information on such issues as curriculum, school policies, or budget.
- As leaders emerge from parent groups, invite them to represent their group on school advisory committees or councils.
- Encourage the formation of parent support groups for parents from ethnic groups often not represented in the PTA/PTO, or parents who are recent immigrants. This will assist those parents in learning about the school system in the U.S. and in becoming more involved in their children's education.
- The school may view the existence of more than one parent group as competitive and divisive. If educators are sensitive to the diversity in parents' backgrounds and current needs, they will realize that several parent groups may be desirable, to represent different demographic and educational concerns.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #10: Does the School Reach Out to the Community?

In many communities, the school occupies a place of special prominence. Schools are often overwhelmed by pressure to improve achievement for a diverse population of students, and do not always actively pursue partnerships with the other community organizations. The school should take the initiative by opening its doors to the existing community network of services and encouraging full participation from families in the planning and implementation of cooperative efforts.

Barriers to Reaching Out to the Community

- School personnel may not be familiar with community resources for families and children.
- Many services are not highly visible in the community, operate on shoestring budgets, and do not publicize their services widely.
- Schools often disregard programs sponsored by religious groups and churches for fear of entanglement in religious issues.
- Teachers and staff often do not reside in the community the school serves and are not connected to its network of people and associations working to improve the quality of life.
- Community service organizations and schools have few opportunities to collaborate on mutual goals.
- Community leadership may be critical of the school, creating an adversarial relationship.

What Schools Can Do to Promote Community Collaborations

- Form a committee comprised of school staff and community members to conduct an "inventory" of school -- and community -- sponsored programs and services for students and families. Distribute the report to families, school staff and the community.
- Co-sponsor or endorse special community initiatives that help children or improve the community.
- Make frequent use of the media to announce new programs, initiatives, and special events, and to encourage community participation.
- Send representatives from the school to community forums and neighborhood improvement association meetings and other important events.
- Ask local businesses to display announcements, help with distribution of fliers, and promote school/community events.

- Ask community business leaders for advice and participation in school-sponsored events instead of focusing on monetary contributions.

Possible School/Community Projects

- Tutoring and family literacy services
- Crime watch and school safety initiatives
- Emergency clothing and food distribution
- After-school and summer recreational programs
- Health screening and prevention projects
- Voter registration drives
- Community pride and cultural fairs

What Parents Can Do to Strengthen the School's Outreach

- Volunteer for special community/school events.
- Suggest possible collaborations with programs that have been helpful to families.
- Tell the school which types of community partnerships would be most useful to you and your family. Ask for parent representation on advisory committees to these partnerships.
- Help the school keep abreast of new programs, services and initiatives in the community.

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Steps to Success

QUESTION #11: Do Teachers Communicate Well with Parents?

The first step for schools is to understand that parents *do* care about their children. Remember that parents may bring to the school setting all the fears and anxieties related to their own experiences in school. Joining into a partnership of trust around the goal you share -- the best education for the child -- will help dissolve many of those fears, and will help achieve that goal.

Barriers to Effective Communication between Parents and Teachers

- Parents sometimes believe that teachers blame them and their children when problems arise in school.
- Teachers and administrators often identify problems, but do not offer suggestions or services to solve them.
- Parents would like to help children at home with academic subjects, but teachers may not encourage them or provide specific learning activities to be done at home.
- Parents often are not informed about their child's academic, behavior, or attendance problems early enough to take constructive action.

Tips for Schools to Improve Teacher/Parent Communication

- Send regular reports to parents about the child's academic performance and behavior, with good news as well as bad. Establish a day of the week when children's written work is sent home for parents to see.
- Communicate with parents about the curriculum and give them suggestions for home learning activities.
- Use programs such as PATT (Parents Are Teachers Too) and TIPS (Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork) which provide the school with educational materials for parents to use at home.
- Inform parents about homework policy. Prepare and distribute material to parents on their role in monitoring their child's homework.
- Distribute a list of expectations for classroom behavior and academics so that parents and students are clear on goals and objectives from the beginning.
- Distribute information to parents on study skills and on how they can help their child learn to achieve.

- Establish a homework help line at the school, where parents can call to receive a recorded message about work assignments. Sponsor a TV or radio call-in program, staffed by teachers, to provide homework help to students.

- Provide parents with information about discipline policy. Include procedures for informing them when their child has a problem, and how they can appeal a punitive action if they think their child has been unfairly accused.

- Inform parents about the school's attendance policy, how excused and unexcused absences are defined, and what steps parents should take when their child has to miss school.

- Inform parents in a timely way when their child begins to show a pattern of tardiness and/or absenteeism. Consult parents about a course of action which the school and parent can take as partners to deal with the attendance problem.

What Parents Can Do to Communicate Better with Teachers

- Request information on the school's discipline, attendance, and homework policies, if they are not automatically provided.

- Ask the principal and teachers to inform parents immediately if their child has a behavior problem, begins to be absent from school regularly, or does not prepare and hand in homework assignments. Parents should be consulted about these problems before they become serious enough to threaten the success or completion of their child's education.

- Parents should be willing to speak out when they believe the school policies have not been administered fairly or their child is being accused or punished unfairly.

- Ask for ways families can work with children at home to reinforce what the teacher has done in class. Request that the teacher make available materials that families can use.

- Provide an area at home where children can keep their school things and, if possible, do school work without continual interruption. Establish regular blocks of time when the child is expected to do school work, and follow up to monitor homework.

Step to Success

QUESTION #12: Does the School Provide Opportunities for Parents and Teachers to Develop a Strong Partnership?

Section A: Strengthening Parent-Teacher Partnership

Parents should be involved in the educational process every step of the way. Because parent involvement is the ultimate reinforcement for all learning activities, the time invested early on will pay off later by creating rapport between home and school and a more supportive environment in the classroom. When parents and teachers work together to enhance understanding in the best interest of the child's education, the foundation is laid for effective home-school collaboration.

Barriers to Parent/Teacher Partnerships

- Teachers often feel overworked (and underpaid) and may not wish to spend extra time and energy contacting parents.
- Teacher unions and/or school district regulations may discourage teachers from spending extra time with parents.
- Contacts between school and home tend to be negative and one-way. Parents most often hear from the teacher or principal when there is bad news.
- Teachers and administrators may have low or negative expectations of low-income and culturally diverse families.
- Low-income and minority parents may have had negative experiences with schooling, leading to low expectations for themselves and their children, and distrust of the school.
- Parents may not understand what the schools expect of them and what their roles and responsibilities are.

Tips for Teachers to Strengthen Parent/Teacher Partnerships

- Welcome every family into your classroom and make them feel comfortable in the school.
- Think of at least one thing you like about each student, and lead with that when talking to parents.
- Establish and maintain open, two-way communication with parents and other family members.
- Contact the parents of all your students regularly, at least once a month. Establish regular times when parents can contact you.

- Invite the families of your students to a class get-together once or twice a year. Visit the homes of your students once a year.
- Provide a variety of options for parents to collaborate with you in the education of their children.
- Participate in school activities designed to help staff and families get to know each other.

What Parents Can Do to Strengthen Parent/Teacher Partnerships

- Establish a relationship with your child's teacher early in the school year. Start off on a positive note; say that you expect your child to do well and that you will help that happen.
- Meet with the teacher and other school personnel regularly.
- Treat the teacher with respect. Schedule all conferences ahead of time; there may be a legitimate reason why an unscheduled visit is unwelcome.
- Never miss a parent-teacher conference, and use the opportunity to share information with the teacher.
- Make sure that communication flows two ways, both from school to home and home to school.
- Exercise your right and responsibility to voice your questions and concerns in constructive ways.

Section B: Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are one of the primary means of communication between parents and teachers. They should be scheduled regularly in the fall and spring, and both parties should feel free to plan additional meetings as problems or issues arise. This can serve as an opportunity for both parties to share information about school and home and to lay a foundation for working together to guarantee school success for the child.

Barriers to Successful Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Conferences may be scheduled at inconvenient times which conflict with parents' jobs and/or family responsibilities.
- Teachers and parents may lack communication skills needed for a constructive conference.
- Parents and/or teachers may become defensive, hostile or argumentative.
- Parents and/or teachers may not be prepared.
- Time is inadequate to discuss problems and concerns fully.
- Problems may be glossed over or denied.
- Agreements made at the conference are forgotten.
- A translator is not available for parents with limited English proficiency.

Tips for Successful Parent/Teacher Conferences

- Hold conferences on a regular basis, at least twice a year. Both parents and teachers should feel free to call for additional conferences at any time to discuss learning, behavior, curriculum, placement, or other educational issues.
- Schedule conference times convenient to both parents and teachers; encourage teachers to be available during after-school, evening, or weekend hours to accommodate the schedules of working parents.
- Hold workshops for parents and staff to enhance conferencing skills.
- Inform limited-English-speaking parents in their primary language about the conference and how to prepare for it. Have a translator available to the parent before, during, and after the conference.
- Evaluate and review conference effectiveness.

What Parents Can Do to Make the Conference a Success

Before the conference:

- Review school records, report cards, progress reports, and any papers brought home from school.
- Look over the parent handbook, curriculum materials, and other information distributed by the school.
- Talk to your children about feelings toward the school and any problems that exist.
- List specific questions to ask the teacher at the conference.

During the conference:

- Consider this meeting as a time to work together to solve problems rather than to blame one another.
- Take notes on the important points made by the teacher and ask the questions prepared ahead of time.
- Find out what steps the teacher has taken to meet the child's individual educational needs in the classroom.
- Ask about specific ways to help the child at home.

After the conference:

- Talk to the child about what happened at the conference, the positive aspects and areas where improvement is needed.
- Keep in touch with the teacher, by telephone and with written notes, or schedule another conference to be updated on the child's progress.
- If strong disagreements with the teacher arise at the conference, call the principal and ask him/her to set up another meeting with the teacher to try to resolve the differences.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #13: Do Parents Have Opportunities to Develop a Relationship with the Principal?

The accessibility of the principal is key to the success of a parent involvement initiative. If the principal fully endorses efforts to involve parents and is visible and enthusiastic, the staff will be more creative and persistent in its outreach and communication with families. If parents sense that there is no support from the principal, they are less likely to believe that the school genuinely desires and appreciates their participation.

Principals who distance themselves from parents or are seldom available to talk with parents individually, except in a crisis, set the tone for the entire school. Parents need to have confidence in the school's leadership and to feel that the principal knows their children and is interested in getting to know them.

Ways Principals Can Build Relationships with Families

- Establish a school climate that is positive, friendly, and open to the community. Overtly recognize and affirm the fundamental premises of parent involvement: all children can learn, parent involvement is a valuable resource, all parents/families can have an impact.
- Call parents personally to welcome them to the school and invite greater participation.
- Lead a team of staff, parents, and community members to brainstorm possible activities and actions that are consistent with the parent involvement policy.
- Post times for parents to drop in to the principal's office for a visit, or schedule events such as a breakfast or lunch for parents and principal to exchange ideas.
- Greet parents who bring their children to school; invite them to come in and visit the parent room or center.
- Sponsor a round table discussion at which parents ask questions and express concerns to you.
- Organize workshops and discussion sessions for school staff to increase their skills in communicating and collaborating with parents. Arrange for teachers to share successful strategies with each other.

What Parents Can Do to Build a Relationship with the Principal

- Make an appointment to meet the principal. Express your desire to be an active and involved parent at the school.
- Attend school events, and ask if the principal will attend.
- Invite the principal to join informal gatherings of parents in the parent room/center to chat and get to know families better.
- Invite the principal to religious group functions, community events and other activities that will provide insight and information into the community and its families.
- Where appropriate, praise the principal for successful efforts, so that your telephone calls do not always signify problems or complaints.

Steps to Success

QUESTION # 14: Are Parents Involved in How the School Is Run?

Increasingly, parents are becoming involved with school policy making. In some cases, federal or state legislation has mandated this activity; more often, principals themselves have organized the involvement of parents in their school buildings. For any educational program, involvement of this kind makes good sense. Parents have unique insights into children's needs and definite ideas about the directions education should take. Because schools exist as a service to parents and families, parents have the right to be represented in policy-making decisions, and should be willing to contribute their time, energy, and talents.

Barriers to Increased Parent Involvement in Decision Making

Parents are much less likely to be involved in schools where:

- The principal and other educators feel that they are the experts; they are paid to run the schools; they alone have the authority to set policy, make decisions and operate the schools.
- Educators think parents do not have the knowledge or the commitment to be involved in making decisions and setting policy.
- The school structure is not designed to include parents, families, or community leaders in governance or decision-making.

Types of Governance and Decision-Making Organizations

- Federally mandated councils
  - Chapter 1 Parent Advisory Councils (PACs)
  - Bilingual Education Parent Advisory Councils
  - Vocational Education Advisory Councils
- State-mandated organizations (e.g. Kentucky, South Carolina)
  - School Improvement Councils
  - Local School Councils
  - Shared Decision-making Councils
- Local activities
  - Advisory committees for the school board
  - PTA/PTO or other parent groups
  - School-site councils in school based management system.

Decision-Making Areas in which Parents Can Participate

- Helping to set school goals and evaluate their effectiveness
- Developing and revising curriculum
- Selecting textbooks
- Setting school behavior rules and classroom discipline methods
- Deciding how much homework should be assigned
- Evaluating how children are learning
- Developing budget priorities
- Reviewing and revising school policies on such issues as discipline, suspension, grading, attendance, promotion/retention
- Revising report card formats
- Planning school improvement efforts
- Evaluating teachers, principal, curriculum, special programs
- Interviewing and hiring teachers and administrators

Tips for Schools

- Include representatives from the PTA/PTO, Chapter 1 PACs, parent advisory committees for bilingual education, and/or other parent groups in the review or revision of school policies.

- Provide training for parents and other members of advisory councils, to assist them to become more knowledgeable about education issues and effective in working with the school.

What Parents Can Do to Become Involved in Decision-Making

- Work toward a policy that ensures all school committees or advisory boards have parent and community representation, and that parents are involved, from planning through evaluation.

- Suggest a brainstorming session on the appropriate role of parents. Include parents, teachers and principal in the discussion. Form new committees to deal with parent concerns.

- Establish a school effectiveness advisory committee with the principal's approval. Analyze such issues as discipline problems, standardized test scores and promotion/retention practices.

- Participate in training if available. Become knowledgeable about the school's organization, policies and practices. Be willing to speak out at meetings.

Step for Success

QUESTION #15: Does the School Have a Clear Policy on Parent Involvement?

A formal, written parent involvement policy serves to inform educators, parents, and community that family-school relationships are a priority. A parent involvement policy can be prepared at the school, but will carry more force when backed by a policy at the district level. Individual schools should use the policy as a framework, and add and implement their own programs, activities, and practices to serve their particular community of parents and students.

Barriers to Developing a Parent Involvement Policy

- Cooperation may be hampered initially by diverse ideas about what to include.
- A clear definition of the appropriate role of parents and families in the school may not exist.
- Sufficient information about what should be included in a parent involvement policy may not be readily available.
- School leaders often have little previous experience in this aspect of education.
- Educators may be used to an environment where there is more distance between schools and families.

Tips for Schools or School Boards to Develop a Parent/Family Involvement Policy

- Use examples of policies from other districts as the beginning framework.
- In developing the policy, be sure to include teachers, parents, school board members, and community leaders, in addition to professional educators and administrators.
- Include abstract and general provisions such as principles, purposes, goals, and expectations, rather than specific programs, activities, and timelines.
- Seek endorsements of the parent involvement policy from school board members, teacher and administrator unions, PTAs/PTOs and other parent groups, Chapter 1 Parent Advisory Councils, and community groups active in the schools.
- Publicize the policy widely, in news media, school newsletters, and during staff inservice training and development activities.

What Parents Can Do to Develop a Policy

- Talk with school board members and encourage them to consider adopting a strong parent involvement policy.
- Offer to assist in drafting a policy, based on examples available elsewhere in this publication. (See Chapter 11)
- Form a committee to prepare a draft policy; publicize the process and encourage as many people as possible to be involved in preparing the policy.

Suggested Provisions of a School District Family Involvement Policy

- Involve parents of students of all ages and at all grade levels in the children's education.
- Recognize family differences (including structure, circumstances and responsibilities) that might impede parent participation as legitimate obstacles to overcome.
- Make information available about their child's participation and progress in specific educational programs, and the objectives of those programs to parents on a regular basis.
- Ensure that parents who lack literacy skills or who do not speak English have opportunities to participate.
- Provide opportunities for parents to assist in the instructional process at home as well as at school.
- Enhance teacher and staff effectiveness with parents through professional development.
- Form school linkages with social service agencies and community groups to address key family and community issues with the purpose of increasing children's school readiness.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #16: Does the School Give Parents Adequate Information about the Curriculum?

Parents can be much more effective in supporting education if they are fully informed about the curriculum their child is expected to master, about special programs available, and about their child's placement. Parents want to know what is being taught; they can reinforce it at home if they are provided with adequate support. The teachers and principal have the authority to decide on the best classroom and program for the child, but parents should be fully informed about the school's recommendation and consulted when a change is being considered.

Barriers to Parent Involvement in Curriculum Decisions

- Little information designed for parents about the curriculum and special academic programs may be available.
- Information may be available only in English and/or may be full of technical language written *by* educators only *for* educators.
- Schools may not consult parents about decisions concerning placement in grade, classroom, or program, or about promotion or retention.
- No appeal procedure is in place for parents to question school policies and practices which may not be in their child's best interest.

Tips for Schools

- Provide parents with written information on:
  - Academic requirements for each grade
  - Curriculum objectives--what is to be covered in each academic subject for each grade level
  - New curriculum choices for the school or a particular grade
  - School policies concerning placement (e.g. remedial, special education, advanced placement, honors), retention.
- Invite a specialist or expert in the field to address parents and answer their questions about a new curriculum to be adopted.
- Provide parents with the name and telephone number of a specialist in each curriculum area.

- Provide written information (in English and other languages as appropriate) about the special programs available for children and the standards for placement such as:

  - Gifted programs
  - Special education for children with disabilities
  - Remedial programs for children with learning disabilities or other learning problems
  - Chapter 1 programs, for children with educational needs
  - Bilingual education programs for children whose primary language is not English.

- Provide parents with the names and titles of all special program teachers. Also provide a schedule as to when each specialist is present at the school.

- Consult with parents about the decision to place their child in a special program, or to make any change in their child's academic program. Provide information about what parents can do to change placements.

- Consult with parents early when the school is considering a teacher's recommendation for retention. Explain the procedure for appeal of the school's decision if they disagree with it.

What Parents Can Do to Obtain Information

- Request information from the school about curriculum and special programs.

- Request that the principal and/or teachers consult with parents before changing a child's academic program or placing a child in a special program, or before a decision is made to require a student to repeat a grade.

- Become active in the PTA/PTO or other parent groups. Suggest that they sponsor a program for parents to learn about special programs.

- Monitor the child's progress in special programs. Consult with the teacher to review goals and expectations; request that the placement be changed if you are dissatisfied with the progress being made.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #17: Does the School Fully Inform All Parents about Its Goals for Student Achievement?

Parents want to understand what takes place in the classroom during the 6-7 hours that children spend there each day. Although they acknowledge the teacher as the expert at instruction, they will be more effective partners if they are aware of the school's goals and expectations, and the methods used to reach those goals. Parents should also be informed about the placement of their child in ability groups within the classroom or in classrooms which are "tracked" by ability.

Many parents feel that teachers favor children who learn quickly and easily, and lose interest and patience with those who learn more slowly or who require different and creative techniques in order to learn. If parents and teachers can collaborate in sharing information about the child's learning style, strengths, and weaknesses, they may be able to design a strategy which will result in the child's success in school.

Barriers to Parent/School Collaboration about Goals and Expectations

- Teachers may assume that children from low-income, minority families will have more learning problems or difficulty achieving at a satisfactory level.
- Schools tend to refer children from low-income, ethnically diverse, and limited-English-speaking families to special education without proper testing and evaluation. Such students are disproportionately represented in special education programs.
- Many educators favor ability grouping, which usually results in some children being labelled as slow and placed in a low track where they are not provided with a quality education.

What Schools Can Do to Involve Parents in Setting Educational Goals

- Include parents and community leaders in efforts to identify and design educational goals for the school.
- Set high expectations for the achievement of every child. Inform parents about these goals, and encourage parents to speak out if any problems occur in their child's education.
- Post grade-level expectations and educational goals in highly visible places around the school, in a language parents can understand.
- Establish a task force comprised of parents and teachers to look into raising achievement scores of groups of students who have fallen behind.

- Inform parents in a timely fashion if their child has a problem, is below grade level in an academic subject, has behavior problems, or is often late or absent from school. Provide parents with concrete suggestions about steps they can take to improve the situation.

- Encourage teachers to focus attention on all students, not just a few. Teachers and administrators should believe that all children can learn and that it is in their power to teach children basic skills effectively. Frequent contact with the parents of students who are having difficulty is especially important so that they can help their child succeed.

- Provide staff with training and support services for helping all children with problems, and encourage them to enlist the assistance of the parents in this task.

- Review and reconsider the school's tracking policy. Develop procedures for encouraging students to enroll in a higher ability group. Replace the lower tracks with tutoring and other individualized assistance.

- Plan an in-service training session on cooperative learning and other alternatives to tracking and ability grouping. Invite parents and family members.

- Keep parents, parent organizations and students informed of all changes in school policy and practices on placement.

What Parents Can Do to Raise Expectations

- Let the school know that you want your child to receive a high quality education, and that you want to be informed when problems arise so you can take action immediately to seek solutions.

- Study the literature and research reports on ability grouping and tracking. Become knowledgeable about the pro's and con's, and work with other parents to raise questions about the school's tracking policies and practices.

- Question the school about the placement of your child. If you think your child is not being challenged or is assigned to a low ability group which is inappropriate, ask what you can do to have your student moved to a higher level.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #18: Are Parents Fully Informed about Student Academic Performance?

Grades, tests, and report cards are standard methods for monitoring, charting, and reporting on student achievement. One hundred million individual tests are now administered to American school-children every year, to screen for everything from kindergarten readiness to graduate school admission. Some educators are questioning the heavy reliance on test scores as a valid measure of student achievement.

The school board has the authority (and responsibility) to establish a policy on grading so that practices and procedures are consistent throughout the district. Teachers have the task of implementing the grading system and communicating with parents about student progress. Parents also should be informed of the process for questioning grades if they think they have been assigned unfairly or are based on factors other than academic performance.

Barriers to Parent Involvement with Academic Performance

- Information for parents about grading policies and testing is often incomplete and inadequate.
- Report card format and contents are not adequately explained to parents.
- Parents are generally consulted only when problems arise, often too late for something constructive to be done.
- Many standardized tests are considered to be culture-biased or gender-biased, and therefore do not provide objective or accurate assessments of many students.

What Schools Can Do to Involve Parents in Academic Performance

- Inform parents about the schedule for standardized tests throughout the year.
- Provide parents with information about the content and purposes of the tests to be given, what the scores mean, and how they will be used.
- Consult with parents if a test indicates the child should be placed in a special program or receive additional help.
- When informing parents of their own child's performance on standardized tests, inform them also of the performance of the class and school as a whole. It is one thing for a child to test below grade level; it is another problem when the whole class is behind.
- Explain grading policy to parents. Encourage them to discuss specific grades with the teacher, who should tell them how the grade was determined and what the student can do to improve the grade.

- Prepare and distribute reports to parents in the interim between regular report cards; if their child is having serious difficulty in the class, they can take action early. Suggest to the parent and student what can be done to raise the grade.

What Parents Can Do to Become More Informed

- Request that the school inform parents about the grading policy, the schedule for testing, and how test results will be used. Review test scores and ask for an explanation if necessary.
- Keep the child's tests and report cards on file for future reference.
- Review your child's report card carefully and ask for explanations if questions arise.
- Review the grading policy to make sure that academic grades assess and reflect academic performance only. Behavior, attitudes, or conduct should be assessed and graded separately. Parents should also check to make sure that the school does not reduce grades based on absences from school.
- Speak out to school administrators and the school board about the limitations of tests as a measure of a child's abilities. Ask that the school consider using methods for evaluating student performance other than testing and conventional grading, such as portfolios or demonstrations of competency.
- Question any placement or grouping decision made by the school based solely on a test score.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #19: Does the School Help Parents Be More Effective?

For parents to become true partners in the educational process, it is important that the school be sensitive to daily parenting struggles, concerns and priorities. Parents are often called on to "fix" their children's bad behavior at school without the support and information they need to be effective in dealing with the problem. While parents may know their children well, they rely heavily on their intuitive knowledge. Often they are unaware of more objective information that could be useful in helping to understand better the psychological, cognitive, social and emotional growth of their children. The school can play an important role in providing parents access to the best thinking about methods and strategies for becoming more effective parents in a way that connects family life and school with academic and personal achievement.

Barriers To Helping Parents Become More Effective

- If families are not consulted about their priorities and concerns, events planned by the school don't appeal to parents and are not seen as culturally responsive.
- Cultural differences in perceptions about what constitutes a "functional" family may make parents feel inadequate or condescended to.
- Difficulties often arise in scheduling workshops or other gatherings at times when parents can attend.
- Alternatives to traditional ways of sharing information with parents (e.g. video and audio cassettes, public service announcements, home visits.)
- Holding workshops on "effective parenting" may make families feel that the school has judgmental attitudes and is focusing on parent deficits when discussing discipline and other issues of raising children.

What Schools Can Do to Promote Strategies for More Effective Parenting and Home Learning Activity

- Send frequent, upbeat, highly readable tips addressing one issue to parents in a newsletter feature or special "fact sheet." The tone should be one of sharing among friends and colleagues, not of experts transmitting knowledge to the ignorant.
- Send a checklist of choices of topics for parents, and offer to sponsor workshops or seminars on their top picks.
- Encourage parents to co-present or facilitate workshops and other events along with teachers and other professionals.

- Invite grandparents and other family members and friends to participate in events. Encourage men to attend and conduct workshops.
- Make sure all events actively involve all participants.
- Sponsor parent support groups. Plan social events that allow parents to get to know and trust each other.
- Find resources in the community for speakers, information and referrals.

Steps to Success

QUESTION #20: Are Community Services Offered through the School?

Many observers believe that schools are being asked to take on too much, at a time when basic educational goals often go unmet. Others counter that children from families with inadequate medical care and nutrition, living at or below the poverty level, cannot possible learn well; therefore, providing direct or referral services to families is integral to the mission of the public schools.

Schools that do not have a mechanism for helping students connect with needed services send a message that the school is not concerned with families. Family survival issues cannot be ignored by the school if partnerships with the community are to be effective. Schools that are knowledgeable about resources in the community and committed to helping connect families to those resources have a stronger foundation for building relationships that lead to greater academic achievement for students.

Barriers to Schools Providing Community Services

- Teachers feel they are trained to instruct in the classroom, not as counsellors or referral agents.
- The school's primary responsibility is education; school personnel often don't have the time or the expertise to deal with issues related to health, social services, literacy, and so on.
- Schools often have only enough space for classrooms and basic education services.
- Additional custodial services and insurance might be necessary to support non-educational services in the school.

Services Which Might Be Offered in a Full-Service School

- Medical and dental services, including immunizations, family planning counseling, prenatal care for pregnant teens
- Referral to social services, public assistance, food stamps
- GED and basic education courses for parents
- English for immigrant or limited-English-speaking parents
- Literacy programs
- Parent education, for teen parents or for parents referred by the courts for child abuse or neglect
- Mental health counseling
- Employment counseling, training, and placement

What Schools Can Do to Offer Community Services

- Provide a full-time staff person such as a school social worker to coordinate the services, and to seek the advice of outside experts if necessary.
- Establish advisory committees including all segments of the community, to determine both the needs of the community and how best to meet them in accordance with local values.
- Plan staff development activities that help inform teachers and administrative staff of what is available for families in the community. Establish programs for cross-training, so that, for example, teachers understand the role of social workers and how human resources departments operate, and agency personnel understand how the school is organized.
- Involve parents, other citizens, children, and social agency personnel in the program from the beginning.
- Get the word out. Include information about community events and services in the parent newsletter and school handbook, post information in the parent room, hallways and reception area.
- Mail school notices, newsletters and other information to community service agencies, religious organizations and neighborhood associations, and get on their mailing lists.
- Provide picture ID cards for parents without driver's licenses.
- Sponsor a community breakfast: Invite community service people into the school and request that they bring literature for distribution to families in the school.

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Extra Steps to Success

Parent Involvement at the Middle School

Many parents become less active participants in their children's education once they leave the elementary school level. Parent involvement during the middle school years is as important to a child's success as it is in the earlier grades.

Children at this age need their parents as much as ever. They need reassurance that they are loved and cared for. They need sympathetic adults with whom to share their increasingly complex and grownup thoughts.

Most of the ideas offered in *Taking Stock* apply to middle schools as well as elementary and high school; the following are additional ideas, tips, and suggestions for parent involvement in middle school.

Barriers to Parent Involvement in Middle School

- Middle schools seem large and impersonal compared to elementary school. Each student is assigned to 5 or 6 teachers and each teacher is responsible for instructing as many as 150 students each day.
- Students in early adolescence are striving toward independence from parents, and may tell their parents not to be involved.
- Teachers and administrators at middle or junior high schools may discourage parents from participating, using arguments such as "it's time to let go" and "parent involvement is not appropriate at this age."

Tips for Teachers and Administrators to Increase Parent Involvement

- Hold an orientation for incoming students and their families at the feeder elementary schools during the spring before they transfer.
- Plan and sponsor a well-designed and well-publicized orientation meeting for parents to explain to them the philosophy, curriculum, and structure of the middle school.
- Sponsor programs to help parents understand the developmental aspects of the early adolescent years.
- Organize the school so that at least one person gets to know each child well -- how the child is doing in all subjects and how he or she is adjusting socially to the middle school environment. That person becomes the parent contact, staying in close touch with parents, not only to tell them about trouble but also to share successes.

- Consider providing a full-time parent liaison to be responsible for bringing parents and school together. This person helps parents understand the school structure and personnel, telephones parents when their child misses school, and talks to teachers about parent concerns.

- Be sure to explain school policies and practices to parents, in such areas as attendance, discipline, and placement. Design and publicize a fair and accessible procedure for parents to appeal actions of the school.

- Involve parents in efforts to develop job opportunities or organize summer activities for middle school children in the community.

What Parents of Middle School Students Can Do to Stay Involved

- Get to know several teachers rather than just one. Let all of them know that you expect your child to do well in school. Introduce yourself to the principal, too.

- Ask for periodic parent-teacher conferences, if they are not automatically scheduled.

- Stay in touch with the counselors, to make sure they contact you if problems develop.

- Collect and carefully read information on school policies and curriculum. Review your child's school records each year. Monitor your child's test scores and academic performance. Ask the teachers or principal for help if needed.

- Communicate with your child about school on a regular basis; if a problem develops, contact the appropriate school staff person to help resolve it.

- Respond to notes and other communications from the school.

Extra Steps for Success

Parent Involvement at the High School

Parent involvement tends to lessen dramatically by the time students reach high school, although this is the time when a teen needs guidance, from home and school, concerning selection of a course of study, and college or career planning. This is also a time when teenagers are anxious about such issues as drugs, alcohol, AIDS, teen pregnancy and parenthood, suicide, and dropping out of school. Although these topics are of great concern to students, their parents, and the educators at the high school, they may not be addressed in a planned and sensitive way.

Barriers to Parent Involvement in High School

- Parents often do not feel welcome in the school.
- Students wish to establish and maintain independence from family and home.
- Parents are not provided with sufficient information about curriculum, courses of study, attendance policies, or graduation requirements.
- Parents are given few opportunities to visit the school or to meet the teachers and counselors.

What Schools Can Do to Increase Parent Involvement

- Schools should provide parents with information on
  - Curriculum and courses of study
  - School policies regarding discipline, attendance, and grading
  - Graduation requirements
  - How to appeal school decisions which seem unfair.
- Schedule opportunities for parent/teacher conferences; also inform parents about when the teachers may be contacted by phone.
- Inform parents early if their son or daughter is absent from school frequently or is doing poorly in a subject.
- Invite parents to visit the Career Center and encourage them to use the directories and other resources on college and career opportunities.
- Encourage the PTA/PTO to plan and sponsor programs for parents and students on issues such as drugs, AIDS, teenage pregnancy, teen suicide, and other topics of current interest.
- Make sure that parents are aware of resources, tutors, and support services available for their children, if needed.

- Ask students to conduct a survey of parents to evaluate the school and collect ideas for improvement. Distribute survey results to all parents.

- Plan events for parents to get to know each other, so they can develop common standards and guidelines for their children's behavior and social interactions, and can coordinate programs for students. Some high schools send home model policies on curfews and parties. Others send home statements for parents to sign [voluntarily] saying parties at their home will be chaperoned and drug free. The list of parents who sign is made available to other parents.

What Parents Can Do to Become More Involved

- Contact the guidance counselor, set up an appointment to discuss your child's curriculum, course of study, college and career possibilities.

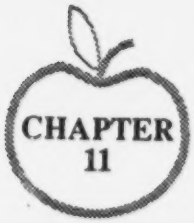
- Be aware of what subjects your child is studying; be prepared to assist with any problems which arise.

- Talk with your teenager regularly about school, monitor homework, and provide assistance if requested.

- Attend the school open house and meet all your child's teachers.

- Get to know your child's friends and their parents.

- Raise issues that concern you (e.g. unsupervised parties, inadequate levels of homework assignments, questionable off-campus lunch hangouts, the need for more extra curricular activities and mentors) with the parent organization and the principal.



Developing a District-Level Policy on Family Involvement

Taking Stock is designed to be used at the school building level, because the actions, attitudes, policies, behaviors, and patterns of practice of teachers and administrators in the school are the crucial ingredients of a strong family-school relationship. The superintendent, the central district staff, and members of the school board can play an important role, however, in supporting and encouraging greater parent involvement in the schools, through such activities as the following:

1. Affirmative implementation of federal and state policies
2. Preparation and adoption of a formal, written family involvement policy
3. Review of policies and practices that may indirectly encourage or hinder family-school partnerships.
4. Encouraging all schools to conduct *Taking Stock* and reporting the general results to the school board
5. Ensuring parent and citizens access to the decision-making process at the school board level.

1. Affirmative Implementation of Federal and State Policies

The school board and superintendent have the responsibility to comply with and carry out federal and state laws and court rulings. A number of federal programs have provisions or mandates for parent involvement, including Chapter 1, bilingual education, and the education of children with disabilities. Many school districts operate under a federal district court-ordered integration plan, which often includes requirements for parent/citizen organization and participation. If the funding that accompanies these programs and mandates is used to support greater collaboration with families and community, it can present more of an opportunity than a burden.

The Hawkins-Stafford Amendments of 1988 are the most recent amendments to Chapter 1. They require that family involvement be organized, ongoing, and inclusive of parents in planning, implementation, and evaluation of Chapter 1 programs. The responsibility of the school district includes insuring that parents of participating children are made aware of the district's parent involvement policies and are included in the development of school improvement plans. Funds from the school's Chapter 1 grant can be used to support a wide range of parent involvement activities. Many schools find it beneficial to extend these opportunities to all families, using Chapter 1 funds as core support and adding funding from other programs such as Chapter 2 to support the expansion.

The Bilingual Education Act, first enacted in 1968, requires that school districts help children with limited English proficiency learn English and provide them with an effective education. Parents must be included in the advisory councils which implement, expand, and/or improve the language assistance programs in the district.

State laws and policies related to parent/community involvement are many and varied, including the following examples:

California

- Local school improvement councils -- these are voluntary, but important financial incentives are offered to schools establishing them

- Proposition 90 -- requires every school to prepare and publish a "School Accountability Report Card"

Massachusetts
- Chapter 188 -- requires schools to establish a School Improvement Council before they can apply for money from the School Improvement Fund

Kentucky
- The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 -- mandates the creation of local school councils to make decisions about curriculum, school improvement, personnel, and budget matters

Illinois
- The Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 -- requires that each school establish a Local School Council responsible for curriculum, budget, personnel, and other decisions

The school board and superintendent can react to these federal and state policies with varying responses, ranging from minimal and grudging compliance to a proactive implementation strategy, using the external policies to promote a visible and activist set of local policies, programs, and practices.

2. Preparation and Adoption of a Formal, Written Family Involvement Policy

The school board is intended to be the policy-making body for the school district. Consequently, the design, formulation, and adoption of a strong family involvement policy can serve to inform the superintendent, school personnel, and parents in the district that improvement of family-school relationships is a priority for the entire school district. It can also indicate that the members of the school board intend to remain active in order to see that their policy is implemented.

A strong family involvement policy can be used to direct the superintendent to provide assistance, support, and rewards to those principals who follow the district's lead in carrying out actions clearly intended to enhance parent involvement in the schools. It can be also used by parents and parent groups to persuade school officials to accept them in more significant roles related to the schools.

There is no one model or ideal family involvement policy for all school districts. At the end of this chapter are examples of policies adopted by several school boards. Because a good policy provides a framework for action, not a set of orders, the provisions are general and do not specify particular actions or timelines which must be followed by local schools. The policy is, of course, only the beginning. Next, the district needs to develop a plan to be implemented by local schools.

It is critical that the process of developing the family involvement policy include input from teachers, administrators, parents, students, and the community, and that its provisions be stated firmly and unequivocally. The school board should take steps to publicize the policy through the news media, PTA/PTO, and community organizations, and to ensure that the superintendent and staff are aware that the school board is resolved to place high priority on family-school partnerships.

In designing a school district parent involvement policy consider the following:

- Involving parents of children at all ages and grade levels;
- Recognizing diverse family structures, circumstances and responsibilities, including differences that might impede parent participation;
- Providing complete information for parents about their child's participation and progress in specific educational programs and the objectives of those programs;
- Involving parents who lack literacy skills or who do not speak English;
- Creating opportunities for parents to assist in the instruction process at school and at home;
- Providing professional development for teachers and staff to enhance their effectiveness with families;
- Linking with social service agencies and community groups to address key family and community issues.

3. Review of Policies and Practices that May Indirectly Encourage or Hinder Family-School Partnerships

There may be a number of district policies and practices which could be reviewed, revised, and/or strengthened to create and cultivate a climate of collaboration between families and schools. The following are some examples of policy areas that the school board might examine to determine if they are fully consistent with a high priority on parent involvement.

- **Incentives, rewards, and recognition.** Do teachers, principals and administrators who promote collaborations with families receive recognition? Are there incentives -- such as mini grants, conference and training opportunities, bonuses -- for teachers who have taken the initiative in reaching out to parents? Is it clear that the district **values** such efforts?
- **Promotion and appointment.** Is skill at working with families and accomplishments in developing partnerships with the community a major criterion for promotion? For appointment to a principalship? At middle and high schools, not just elementary school?
- **Training and professional development.** Not only should a portion of staff development time be focussed on working with families, but the concept of collaboration should be infused into the entire staff development curriculum. For instance, new instructional approaches to reading or classroom management should also include how to inform parents and encourage their involvement. Teachers should also be encouraged to attend conferences, workshops, or training on family-school collaborations.
- **Drawing attendance zones for middle school.** There are many factors to be considered in designating the boundaries of attendance areas for middle schools, including racial and ethnic

balance, transportation, and size of buildings. Another concern should be the preservation of networks of family associations or parental connections which have developed during the years in elementary school. If an elementary school has three fifth grade groups and feeds students to three different middle schools, the effort should be made to try to keep the children together. Better yet, send all the children to the same middle school. The transition from elementary to middle school should be facilitated for both parents and students, by holding orientations for families at both the feeder school and at the new school, before children start at the middle school in the fall.

- **Neighborhood schools vs. busing for integration.** While racial and ethnic balance is critical to the healthy development of children, so is the involvement of their parents in the schools. Busing children from a neighborhood across town to another school can create substantial barriers to parent participation in the schools. The district should encourage schools to work with groups and associations in the home neighborhoods, to hold meetings with parents in their local communities, at the neighborhood school, in community centers, churches, laundromats, or in the parents' homes. Once these networks are formed, the district should be careful to avoid disrupting them. A series of informal get-togethers, such as coffee klatches or breakfasts can be more successful than more formal meetings.

4. Directing the Superintendent to Undertake an Assessment of Family Involvement in the District

The Superintendent can be instrumental in implementing the *Taking Stock* process to assess the prevalence and the effectiveness of the schools' parent involvement efforts. District staff can provide assistance in conducting the survey, in interpreting the results, and in providing leadership in making plans to improve the level of parent participation. It is vital, however, that the schools do not view *Taking Stock* as an inquisition or an intrusion. Each local school community should be responsible for conducting *Taking Stock* and for reporting the results. **Under no circumstances should the results from one school be compared unfavorably to another.**

It might be advisable for one member of the school board to be designated as the liaison with the district staff who will be carrying out this assignment. In that way, the school board can be kept informed about the progress of the assessment, and be better prepared to respond to the results.

5. Ensuring Parent and Citizens Access to the Decision-Making Process at the School Board Level

Every state and the District of Columbia have what are called "Open Meeting" or "Sunshine" Laws. These laws spell out citizens' rights to access and to information from school boards and other public bodies. A recent study by the National Committee for Citizens in Education, *Beyond the Open Door* found that these statutes are not widely known or enforced. In many school districts, neither the school board members nor the parents and citizens who are their constituents are familiar with the laws.

Because the purpose of open meeting laws is to increase access to public bodies, including school boards, it is important that school board members make sure that they are familiar with the laws in their state and that parents and citizens in their district also are informed about them.

State statutes governing open meeting laws may be vague or inadequate, but local school boards have the authority to adopt policies and practices which go beyond the provisions of the state laws. Any action under consideration should, of course, be reviewed by the school board attorney to make sure it does not contradict state law.

School boards that want to follow the intent and spirit of their state open meeting law should be able to answer "yes" to the following questions:

- Is the public given adequate advance notice of meetings?
- Are the agenda, minutes and other documents available for public review?
- Do citizens have the right to attend and speak at school board meetings?
- Are closed sessions strictly limited?
- Are all votes taken in public?

All state laws include provisions covering some of these matters, and all local school boards have the power to address these concerns with local policies.

Based on the results of its study, NCCE concluded that no state has an open meeting law that can be held up as an ideal instrument for protecting public access to local school boards. But this doesn't mean local districts have not taken the initiative to create their own full, responsive policies. By combining the best elements of many laws, a local school board can ensure the full participation of its entire community.

The one area most often neglected by state law is the right of parents and citizens to speak at all school board meetings and on all issues placed before the board. Only fourteen state open meeting laws explicitly provide for public participation at board meetings. But no state law denies local school boards the power to adopt bylaws and other policies which invite and encourage citizen participation, including addressing the board in person, submitting written testimony, requesting that an item be placed on the agenda, and being accorded timely follow-up on questions the board can't answer on the spot. **Those rights should be granted at every open session of every school board in the country.** Parent involvement in education can be truly strengthened if the local school board welcomes remarks, complaints, and opinions from any interested party on any issue related to education.

Another strategy used by school boards to increase parent participation is the appointment of parents and citizens to advisory committees empaneled to examine controversial issues or to study critical problems. If all families in the community are informed about such groups and who is representing them, they may feel as if they have more access to the decision-making process. When seeking parent or community members to serve on advisory committees, the board should be careful not to limit the choices only to those parents who have been active as volunteers or are on the PTA executive board. The board should look to members of community groups or parent advocacy groups that may have been critical of the schools in the past. They might also consider candidates for election to the school board, since those citizens might have a perspective different from school board members or educators currently in the school system.

POLICY
BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Parental Involvement

A. PURPOSE

To reaffirm the Montgomery County public schools system's strong commitment to the role of parents in their children's education and to promote effective, comprehensive parental involvement.

In this policy, "parent" is intended to include parents, guardians, and other family members involved in supervising the child's schooling.

Achievement of this purpose will be sought through a variety of efforts including:

1. Effective two-way communication between all parents and schools regarding school system policies and regulations, local school policies, and an individual child's progress

2. Activities to encourage parental volunteer opportunities in schools both in the classroom and in other areas of the school including attendance at local school programs and events

3. Information and programs for parents on how to establish a home environment to support learning and appropriate behavior

4. Information and programs for parents about how they can assist their own children to learn

5. Assistance to develop parental involvement in educational advocacy through PTAs and other organizations, including school system task forces and advisory committees

B. PROCESS AND CONTENT

While each division, office, and school must assess its role and plan of action to meet these goals, all MCPS employees are expected to convey a commitment to parental involvement.

1. Consistent with this commitment, local schools are expected to:

    a) Develop activities and materials that provide for effective two-way communication between parents and the school on local school policies and individual student progress

    b) Support and encourage parental volunteer opportunities

    c) Provide programs that assist parents in learning how they can help children learn, including activities that are connected to what children are learning in the classroom

    d) Work with PTA leadership to ensure parental input

2. In addition, appropriate staff in central and area offices are expected to support local school efforts and, where relevant:

a) Communicate with parents on school system policies and regulations

b) Provide for the development of parenting programs and materials, including the use of cable television, pamphlets, adult education courses, parent resource centers, and programs designed to orient new parents to MCPS

c) Maintain and support with appropriate information and training parental volunteer opportunities countywide

d) Assist in the development of parental leadership through PTAs and other recognized groups

e) Work with businesses, organizations, and other government agencies which by their policies and activities can provide support and assistance for parental involvement efforts

f) Provide appropriate teacher and staff training to support effective parental involvement; conduct staff and parent training in ways to communicate and work together including problem solving, conflict resolution skills, and outreach strategies

g) Identify and publicize promising programs and practices related to parental involvement

h) Work with colleges and universities that prepare teachers and administrators to support the inclusion of school and family connections in their training programs

i) Develop methods to accommodate and support parental involvement for all parents with special needs including those with limited English proficiency and those with physical handicaps

j) Develop mechanisms for local schools to use in order to assess the effectiveness of their parental involvement efforts

3. The superintendent will assess the status of parental involvement, review existing policies and procedures, and develop necessary regulations and procedures to support this policy, including a review of staff and budget support.

4. The Board of Education will support parental involvement by seeking parental input on school system policies, including curriculum, facilities and funding issues.

C. REVIEW AND REPORTING

This policy will be reviewed every three years in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 66-90, November 13, 1990.

District 112 Parent Partnership Policy
Adopted 9-14-89

Rationale

It is the goal of School District 112 to "develop strong partnerships with the home." Parents and schools working as partners increase student achievement and develop positive attitudes about self and school.

The key factor in the home-school partnership is the relationship between the teacher and the parent. Teachers are professionals who manage a variety of instructional resources. Parents are an essential resource in the learning process of their children. Organizational support from the School Board, district administration, and building principals enables teachers to effectively develop the partnership.

District 112 schools already are active in fostering the home-school relationship. The intent of this policy is to result in consciously doing those things already in practice in a more efficient, consistent and effective manner, as well as generating new ways of strengthening the partnership.

Policy

The partnership between home and school will be supported by:

1. The development of an infrastructure to continually assess, plan and implement strategies that building the partnership.
    a. A district-wide committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to guide overall program efforts and serve as a home-school partnership network.
    b. Coordination of activities through the staff development system in areas of teacher inservice, assessment of teaching strengths, and communication with parents toward creation of the best possible learning experience for each child.
2. Self-study of parent involvement practices by teams of parents, teachers and the administrator in each school using the following seven basic principles considered essential to home school partnerships.
    a. Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful and friendly.
    b. Communications with parents (whether about school policies and programs or about their own children) are frequent, clear and two-way.
    c. Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children's school learning and behavior.
    d. Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and to share in the decisionmaking.
    e. The principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families.
    f. The school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community at large.
    g. The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available.
3. Resources will be provided to principals, teachers and parents by the Parent Partnership Liaison.

School District 112, its School Board, and staff will provide leadership in development of clear avenues of parent involvement. Full realization of the partnership will be achieved through the on-going commitment and active participation by both home and school.

For more information, contact:
Parent Partnership Liaison,Chaska Public Schools
2600 Park Ridge Drive
Chaska, MN 55318 Phone: 612-448-8700

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS
Community Relations and Integration Services Division
Parent Involvement Programs

PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education recognizes the necessity and value of parent involvement in support student success and academic achievement. In order to assure collaborative partnerships between parents and schools, the board, working through the administration, is committed to:

a. involving parents as partners in school governance including shared decision making.

b. establishing effective two-way communication with all parents, respecting the diversity and differing needs of families.

c. developing strategies and programmatic structures at schools to enable parents to participate actively in their children's education.

d. providing support and coordination for school staff and parents to implement and sustain appropriate parent involvement from kindergarten through grade twelve.

e. utilizing schools to connect students and families with community resources that provide educational enrichment and support.

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The Middle School Years: A Parents' Handbook, Nancy Berla, Anne T. Henderson, and William Kerewsky, 1989. National Committee for Citizens in Education, 900 Second Street, N.E., Suite 8, Washington, DC 20002. (202) 408-0447.

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The following titles are available from The Center for Early Adolescence, Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall, Carrboro, NC 27510, (919) 966-1148:

Early Adolescence: What Parents Need to Know, Anita Farel, 1982.

Living with 10- to 15-year-olds: A Parent Education Curriculum, Robert Pulver, editor, 1992.

Organizations

The ASPIRA Association
1112 16th Street, N.W., Suite 340
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 835-3600

Center for Early Adolescence
Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall
Carrboro, NC 27510
(919) 966-1148

Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(410) 516-0370

Family Policy and Compliance Office (administers school records law)
Department of Education
Rm. 3017, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202
(202) 401-2057

Hispanic Policy Development Project
1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-8414

Home and School Institute
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 466-3633

Institute for Responsive Education
League of Schools Reaching Out
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353-3309

National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-3345

National Association of Partners in Education
601 Wythe Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-4880

National Black Child Development Institute
1463 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 387-1281

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE
1201 16th Street, N.W. Box 39
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 393-8159

National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents
Edmonds School
9th & D Streets, N.E. Suite 201
Washington, DC 20002

National Committee for Citizens in Education
900 Second Street, N.E., Suite 8
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 408-0477; (800) NETWORK (638-9675); (800) LE AYU

National Community Education Association
801 N. Fairfax Street #209
Alexandria, VA 22314

National Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA)
700 N. Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 787-0977

National Education Association
Education and Outreach Programs
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabi
PO Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013
(703) 893-6061; (800) 999-5599

Parents as Teachers National Center
9374 Olive Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63132
(314) 432-4330

ıcation (NCPIE)

(800) LE AYUDA (532-9832)

A)

Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

National Programs

Family Math
Lawrence Hall of Science
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
510-642-1823

Family Science
Northwest EQUALS
Portland State Univeristy
P.O. Box 1491
Portland, OR 97207-1491
1-800-547-8887, ext 3045

Family Study Institute
Academic Development Institute
1603 South Michigan Avenue
Chigaco, IL 60616
312-427-1692

MegaSkills Education Center
The Home and School Institute
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-466-3633

Quality Education Project
690 Market Street, Suite 1100
San Francisco, CA 94115
415-398-9224

TransParent School Model
Betty Phillips Center for Parenthood Education
Box 81
Peabody College of Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203
615-322-8080

Accelerated Schools Project
CERAS Building
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-3084

Center for Collaborative Education
1573 Madison Avenue, Room 201
New York, NY 10029
212-348-7821

Coalition for Essential Schools
Brown University
Box 1969
Providence, RI 02912
401-863-3384

League of Schools Reaching Out
Institute for Responsive Education
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617)353-3309

School Development Program
Yale University Child Study Center
230 South Frontage Road
P.O. Box 3333
New Haven, CT 06510
203-785-2548

Reports

At-Risk Families and Schools: Becoming Partners, 1992. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403. (503) 346-5043.

Developing Home-School Partnerships,: From Concept to Practice, Susan McAllister Swap,1993. Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027.

Enhancing Parent Involvement in Schools: A Manual for Parents and Teachers, Susan McAllister Swap, 1987. Teachers College Press, Teachers College, P.O. Box 2032, Colchester, VT 05449.

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Families and Schools in a Pluralistic Society, edited by Nancy Feyl Chavkin, 1993. State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, N.Y. 12246.

Guide to Parent Involvement Resources, 1992. National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education. Available from National Committee for Citizens in Education, 900 Second St., N.E., Suite 8, Washington, D.C. 20002. (202) 408-0447.

Home-School Collaboration: Enhancing Children's Academic and Social Competence, edited by Sandra L. Christenson and Jane Close Conoley, 1992. National Association of School Psychologists, 8455 Colesville Road, Suite 1000, Silver Spring, MD 20910. (301) 608-0500.

Home and School, Partners in Student Success: A Handbook for Principals and Staff, Janet Chrispeels, Beatrice Fernandez, and Jeana Preston, December 1991. San Diego City Schools, 4100 Normal Street, Rm. 2121, San Diego, CA 92103. (619) 293-8560.

New Directions in Parent Involvement,Norm Fruchter, Anne Galletta, and J. Lynne White, 1992. Academy for Educational Development, Inc., 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011. (212) 243-1110.

Planning for Parental Involvement: A Handbook for Administrators, Teachers and Parents, Lettie B. Cale, 1991. Available from Cale Associates, 1924 West Ashland Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009. (602) 252-1324; 474-0747.

Schools and Communities Together: A Guide to Parent Involvement, Karen Reed Wikelund, 1990. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 101 S.W. Main, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204. (503) 275-9500.

Working with Families: Promising Programs to Help Parents Support Young Children's Learning, 1991. Abt Associates, Cambridge, MA.

Newsletters and Periodicals

Education Today: Helping Parents Make a Difference, published eight times a year by Educational Publishing Group, 376 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. (800) 927-6006.

Equity and Choice, a magazine published three times a year by Corwin Press, Inc. in cooperation with the Institute for Responsive Education and the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning. Corwin Press, Inc., 2455 Teller Road, Newbury Park, CA 91320. (805) 499-0721.

NETWORK for Public Schools, a newsletter published six times a year by the National Committee for Citizens in Education, 900 Second Street, N.E., Suite 8, Washington, D.C. 20002. (202) 408-0447.

Parents Make the Difference! a newsletter, published monthly from September to May, which is devoted to practical ideas for parents to help their children. The Parent Institute, P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474. (800) 756-5525.

What's Working in Parent Involvement, a newsletter, published monthly from September to May, which includes practical ideas for schools to promote parent involvement in the education of their children. The Parent Institute, P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474. (800) 756-5525.

Information for Parents Brochures

Twelve topics of interest to parents, available in English and Spanish from the National Committee for Citizens in Education, 900 Second Street, N.E., Suite 8, Washington, D.C. 20002. (202) 408-0447.

1. Parent Involvement
2. Parent/Teacher Conference
3. Corporal Punishment
4. Suspension and Due Process
5. Parents Organizing
6. Access to School Records
7. How to Appeal
8. Education of Children with Disabilities
9. Individualized Education Program
10. When You Disagree
11. Parents and Dropout Prevention
12. The Rights of Students with Limited English

Taking Stock: Family Tally Sheet

School _____ Date_____ N = _____

1. Communicating Often and Openly

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1= ___

Total Score _____

---

2. Reaching all Cultures and Language Groups

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

3. Reaching Working and Single Parents

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d.. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

5. School's Welcome to Families

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

6. Open and Available School and Staff

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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7. Encouraging Volunteers

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

e. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

9. Major PTA/PTO Activities

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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10. Community Outreach

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

11. Teachers Communicate with Parents

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d.. ___

e. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

12. Parent-Teacher Partnership

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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13. Parent-Principal Partnership

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___ x 4 = ___

Good ___ x 3 = ___

Fair ___ x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

14. Parents Involved in Decision-making

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___ x 4 = ___

Good ___ x 3 = ___

Fair ___ x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

15. School's Parent Involvement Policy

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___ x 4 = ___

Good ___ x 3 = ___

Fair ___ x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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16. Information about the Curriculum

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

17. Goals for Student Achievement

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

18. Information on Student Performance

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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19. School Supports Parents
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

20. School Connects to Community Services
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

Who Responded to this Questionnaire? (see cover page)

Parent

Other Family Member

Friend

Teacher

Administrator

Other

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TAKING STOCK: The Last Word / For Families **Tally Sheet**

1. What is the school doing that is most helpful to you as a parent?

2. Please tell us about what you WISH the school would do to make things easier for you and your child.

3. What do you think would be the best ways for parents at your school to become more involved?

4. Do you feel welcome and comfortable in the school? Why?

Haciendo un balance: Hoja de resultados para familias

Escuela_____ Fecha_____ N = ___

1. Comunicación frecuente y franca

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 =___

Bue. ___x 3 =___

Reg. ___x 2 =___

Def. ___x 1 = ___

Puntaje Total _____

---

2. Diferencias culturales y de idioma

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 =___

Bue ___x 3 = ___

Reg ___x 2 = ___

Def ___x 1 =___

Puntaje Total _____

---

3. Comunicación con familias de un solo padre o donde ambos trabajan

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___

Puntaje Total _____

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4. Esfuerzo por estar en contacto con todas las familias

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

5. Sintiendose bienvenido y comodo

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

6. Sintiendose bien recibido y atendido

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

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7. Motivación para prestar servicios voluntarios

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

8. Qué tan activo es el PTA/PTO

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

e. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

9. Actividades principales del PTA/PTO

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___ 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

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10. Contacto con la comunidad

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

11. Los maestros colaboran con los padres

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

e. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

12. Desarrollando una relación estrecha entre padres y maestros

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

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13. Relación del director con los padres

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

C. ___

d. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 =___ Puntaje Total _____

---

14. Participación de los padres en la toma de decisiones

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

15. Política de la escuela sobre la participación de los padres

Ejemplos:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:

Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

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16. Información sobre el plan de estudio
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___
Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

17. Metas académicas para los estudiantes
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___
Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

---

18. Información sobre el rendimiento escolar de sus hijos
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___
Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

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19. Apoyo de la escuela a los padres
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___
Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = Puntaje Total _____

---

20. Servicios comunitarios que ofrece la escuela
Ejemplos:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Escala:
Exc. ___x 4 = ___

Bue. ___x 3 = ___

Reg. ___x 2 = ___

Def. ___x 1 = ___ Puntaje Total _____

¿Quién respondió este cuestionario? (ver introducción)

Padre/madre _____

Abuelo/abuela/otro familiar _____

Amigo/amiga _____

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HACIENDO UN BALANCE: Preguntas Abiertas / Para Familias Tally Sheet

1. ¿Qué es lo más útil que la escuela está haciendo para ayudarle a usted como padre de familia?

2. Por favor, díganos lo que usted DESEA que la escuela haga para que las cosas sean más fáciles para usted y su hijo.

3. ¿Cuál cree usted que sería la mejor forma para que los padres de familia en su escuela participen más?

4. ¿Se siente usted bienvenido y cómodo en la escuela? ¿Por qué?

Taking Stock: Educator Tally Sheet

School _____ Date_____ N = _____

1. Communicating Often and Openly

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___ x 1= ___

Total Score _____

---

2. Reaching all Cultures and Language Groups

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

3. Reaching Working and Single Parents

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d.. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

5. School's Welcome to Families

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

6. Open and Available School and Staff

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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7. Encouraging Volunteers

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

e. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

9. Major PTA/PTO Activities

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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10. Community Outreach
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

11. Teachers Communicate with Parents
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d.. ___

e. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

12. Parent-Teacher Partnership
Examples:
a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:
Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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13. Parent-Principal Partnership

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

14. Parents Involved in Decision-making

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

15. School's Parent Involvement Policy

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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16. Information about the Curriculum

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

17. Goals for Student Achievement

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

18. Information on Student Performance

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

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19. School Supports Parents

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

d. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

---

20. School Connects to Community Services

Examples:

a. ___

b. ___

c. ___

Ratings:

Exc ___x 4 = ___

Good ___x 3 = ___

Fair ___x 2 = ___

Poor ___x 1 = ___

Total Score _____

Who Responded to this Questionnaire? (see cover page)

Parent

Other Family Member

Friend

Teacher

Administrator

Other

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1. What do you think would be the best ways to involve parents in improving student achievement at the school?

2. What do you think needs to change for parents at your school to become more involved?

3. What kind of support would you need from the school to be better connected with your students' families?

4. Do you perceive that parents feel welcomed and comfortable at your school? Why?

Taking Stock: Summary Score Sheet -- Families

Number Responding: N=_____ **School _____**

1. Enter the Total Score from the bottom of each question on the Tally Sheet.
2. Average Score = Total Score divided by N.
3. Grand Total = The Sum of the Total Scores
4. Final Score = The Grand Total divided by the number of questions for the section, divided by N.

	Total Score	Average Score	Final Score
Reaching out to Families			
1. Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Groups	_____	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	_____	
4. Reaching All Families	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	÷ 4 ,÷ N =		_____
Welcoming Families			
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____	
6. Open & Available School & Staff	_____	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	÷ 6,÷ N =		_____
Strong Relationships			
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	÷ 5, ÷ N =		_____
Understanding the Curriculum			
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	÷ 3,÷ N =		_____
More Effective Parents			
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____	
20. School Connects Community Services	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	÷ 2,÷ N =		_____

Taking Stock: Summary Score Sheet -- Educators

Number Responding: N= _____ **School _____**

1. Enter the Total Score from the tally sheet for each question.
2. Average Score = Total Score divided by N.
3. Grand Total = The Sum of the Total Scores
4. Final Score = The Grand Total divided by the number of questions for the section, divided by N.

	Total Score	Average Score	Final Score
Reaching out to Families			
1. Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Groups	_____	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	_____	
4. Reaching All Families	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 4, + N =		_____
Welcoming Families			
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____	
6. Open & Available School & Staff	_____	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 6 ,+ N =		_____
Strong Relationships			
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 5, + N =		_____
Understanding the Curriculum			
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 3 ,+ N =		_____
More Effective Parents			
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____	
20. School Connects Community Services	_____	_____	
GRAND TOTAL	_____		
	+ 2 ,+ N =		_____

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Taking Stock:Family Report Card

❖ ❖ ❖

School _____

	Grade	FINAL GRADE
Reaching out to Families		
1. Communicating Often and Openly with Families	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Language Groups	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	
		____
Welcoming Families to the School Building		
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	
		____
Developing Strong Relationships		
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	
		____
Helping Parents Understand the Curriculum		
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	
		____
Helping Parents Be More Effective		
19. School Supports Parents	_____	
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	
		____

A 3.2 - 4.0 *Great job. Keep up the good work!*
B 2.6 - 3.1 *Good work. A little more will put you on top!*
C 2.0 - 2.5 *Solid beginning. Time for some next steps!*
U 1.0 - 1.9 *Needs improvement. Let's get to work!*

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Taking Stock: Educator Report Card

❖ ❖ ❖

School _____

	Grade	FINAL GRADE
Reaching out to Families		
1. Communicating Often and Openly with Families	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Language Groups	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	
		_____
Welcoming Families to the School Building		
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	
		_____
Developing Strong Relationships		
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	
		_____
Helping Parents Understand the Curriculum		
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	
		_____
Helping Parents Be More Effective		
19. School Supports Parents	_____	
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	
		_____

A 3.2 - 4.0 *Great job. Keep up the good work!*
B 2.6 - 3.1 *Good work. A little more will put you on top!*
C 2.0 - 2.5 *Solid beginning. Time for some next steps!*
U 1.0 - 1.9 *Needs improvement. Let's get to work!*

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Taking Stock: Highs and Lows

School: _____

High Five: Using the Summary Score Sheets, list the five **top-scoring** questions, highest score first, for both Families and Educators. For easy reference, list the question number, the **Total Score** and the short description of the question. Repeat for the five **lowest-scoring** questions, listing the lowest score first.

High Five:

Families			Educators		
Q#	Total Score	Description	Q#	Total Score	Description
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____

Low Five:

Families			Educators		
Q#	Total Score	Description	Q#	Total Score	Description
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____
___	___	_____	___	___	_____

Answer these questions:

1. What do BOTH families and educators rank HIGH?

2. What do BOTH families and educators rank LOW?

3. What do Families rank HIGH, but educators rank LOW?

4. What do educators rank HIGH, but families rank LOW?

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Taking Stock: On Balance

Another way to analyze your results is to ask some related questions about whether the school's efforts are balanced.

Social connections, or Who Knows Who? Is the school working to develop *social* relationships among families, community members, teachers, and administrators? Spending time together informally, such as at spaghetti dinners, family picnics, dances, or festive get-togethers, allows people to get to know and trust each other, to feel more comfortable talking together. Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 6:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
3. Reaching Working and Single Parents	_____	_____
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	_____
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	_____
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷6) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE that number. Consider some activities that will help people get to know each other. Also look at how activities that the school already sponsors can be made more friendly and social.

❖ ❖ ❖

Substantive Information, or What's Really Happening? Are families adequately informed about the school's educational programs, goals for student achievement, and how well students are doing? Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 4:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
9. PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____
11. Teacher Communication	_____	_____
16. Information About the Curriculum	_____	_____
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷4) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE that number. This means that parents need more information on the educational program and student performance.

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Taking Stock: On Balance (continued)

Accessibility, or Who Comes Inside? Is the school readily accessible to families? May they easily look at their child's records, visit the classrooms, meet with teachers? Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 5:

Q#	Description	Average Score Families	Educators
1.	Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____
2.	Reaching All Cultural & Language Groups	_____	_____
6.	Open and Available School and Staff	_____	_____
8.	Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____
15.	School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____
TOTAL		_____	_____
	AVERAGE (÷5) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE that number. Make sure the school is not raising barriers to easy family access to the building and its staff.

❖ ❖ ❖

Inclusion, or Who Sits at the Table? Is the school working to include parents in its daily life? Are parents involved in plans for improvement, consulted about problems or changes in program, encouraged to volunteer and feel a real part of the school? Add up the **average scores** for these questions and divide by 5:

Q#	Description	Average Score Families	Educators
7.	Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____
10.	Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____
14.	Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____
18.	Information on Student Performance	_____	_____
19.	School Supports Parent	_____	_____
TOTAL		_____	_____
	AVERAGE (÷ 5) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number. Consider inviting parents to sit at the table when important matters are being discussed.

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Taking Stock: Parents in Action

Parents play many parts in their children's education. Joyce Epstein, Co-Director of the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, has identified six key roles: Parenting, Communicating, Supporting, Learning, Decision-Making, and Connecting with Community. Let's look at what *Taking Stock* reveals about the school's suppport for parents in these different kinds of activities.

❖ ❖ ❖

Type 1: Parenting -- Developing parenting skills and positive conditions at home to support learning

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (+2) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

❖ ❖ ❖

Type 2: Communicating -- Exchanging information between home and school about children's learning and school programs

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
1. Communicating Often and Openly	_____	_____
2. Reaching all Cultures and Language Groups	_____	_____
3. Reaching Working and Single Parents	_____	_____
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	_____
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____
13. Principal-Parent Relationship	_____	_____
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (+7) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

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Type 3: Supporting -- Participating as volunteers, tutoring, advising, and attending school events

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	_____
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	_____
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	_____
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	_____
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷5) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

❖ ❖ ❖

Type 4: Learning -- Creating a climate for learning at home and taking part in learning opportunities at school

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	_____
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	_____
19. School Supports Parents	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷3) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

❖ ❖ ❖

Type 5: Decision Making -- Being involved in school governance and advocacy

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	_____
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	_____
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷3) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B) CIRCLE this number.

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Type 6: Connecting with Community -- Linking school and families with community resources to strengthen children's learning both in and out of school

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	_____
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷ 2) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number.

❖ ❖ ❖

All Types (1-6): Supporting *all* Parent Activities

Enter the **average scores** for these questions:

Q# Description	Average Score Families	Educators
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	_____
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____
AVERAGE (÷ 2) =	_____	_____

If either the educator or family scores average less than 2.8 (low B), CIRCLE this number. Make sure that your PTA/PTO activities and the school's parent involvement policy support and encourage all six types of family involvement in education, not just a few.

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Taking Stock: School Profile

School: _____ Date Taken: _____

Who Participated?

EDUCATORS		FAMILY	
Teachers	_____	Parents	_____
Administrators	_____	Other Family	_____
Other Staff	_____	Friends	_____

How Do the Report Cards Compare?

	Family Grade	Educator Grade	Check if Different
Reaching Out to Families	_____	_____	_____
Welcoming Families to School	_____	_____	_____
Developing Strong Relationships	_____	_____	_____
Understanding the Curriculum	_____	_____	_____
Helping Parents Be More Effective	_____	_____	_____

Highs and Lows

BOTH families and educators rank high:

BOTH families and educators rank low:

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On Balance

	❖ NEEDS ATTENTION ❖	
	Families	**Educators**
Social connections/Who Knows Who?	_____	_____
Substantive Information/What's Really Happening?	_____	_____
Accessibility/Who Comes Inside?	_____	_____
Inclusion/Who Sits at the Table?	_____	_____

Parents in Action

	❖ NEEDS ATTENTION ❖	
	Families	**Educators**
Type 1: Parenting -- Developing parenting skills and positive conditions at home to support learning	_____	_____
Type 2: Communicating -- Exchanging information about children's learning and school programs	_____	_____
Type 3: Supporting -- Participating as volunteers and attending school events	_____	_____
Type 4: Learning -- Creating a climate for learning at home and taking part in learning opportunities at school	_____	_____
Type 5: Decision-Making -- Being involved in school governance and advocacy	_____	_____
Type 6: Connecting with Community -- Linking school and families with community resources to strengthen children's learning in and out of school	_____	_____

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Taking Stock: Troubleshooting

Families N ÷ 3 = ____
Educators N ÷ 3 = ____

	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	**Educators**
1. Does the school communicate often and openly with you?		
a. Does the school keep you informed about important dates, activities, and events?	❑	❑
b. Are communications from the school easy to understand?	❑	❑
c. Does the school handbook provide useful information for parents?	❑	❑
d. Has the school encouraged you to review your child's records?	❑	❑
2. Does the school respect and respond to its community's cultural and language differences?		
a. Are report cards and newsletters available in a language you understand?	❑	❑
b. Does the school reception staff communicate well with you?	❑	❑
c. Is information about school events available in your neighborhood, such as at local churches and over the radio?	❑	❑
3. If you are a single or working parent, do you feel the school makes a special effort to reach you?		
a. Are meetings and events held evenings and/or weekends to fit your schedule?	❑	❑
b. Is child care provided during meetings and at other school events?	❑	❑
c. Does the school make efforts to reach you at work or in the evening?	❑	❑
4. Does the school make extra efforts to reach all families?		
a. Have you been invited to school gatherings at places in the community, such as local churches or community centers?	❑	❑
b. Are special efforts made to involve fathers and other men important to your children?	❑	❑
c. Have you ever been asked for advice or help in reaching other parents?	❑	❑
d. Have you been introduced to a school staff person whose job is getting to know your community?	❑	❑

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	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
5. Does the school welcome you into the building and make you feel comfortable?		
a. Are directions clearly posted to help you find your way around?	❑	❑
b. Does the school have a parent room or center?	❑	❑
c. Is the office waiting area comfortable?	❑	❑
d. Is the office staff friendly and helpful?	❑	❑
6. Are the school and its staff open and available to you?		
a. Are you welcome in the building any time during the school day?	❑	❑
b. Does the school return your calls within 24 hours?	❑	❑
c. May you easily visit or observe the classroom?	❑	❑
7. Does the school encourage your volunteer participation?		
a. Are there interesting volunteer opportunities you can do at school or at home?	❑	❑
b. Have you been encouraged to volunteer?	❑	❑
c. Does the school appreciate your volunteer efforts?	❑	❑
8. Is the parent-teacher organization (PTA/PTO) active and strong?		
a. Does the PTA/PTO meet at least four times a year?	❑	❑
b. Do you enjoy attending the meetings?	❑	❑
c. Do your child's teachers attend the meetings?	❑	❑
d. Do parents elect PTA/PTO officers?	❑	❑
e. Are you given time to express your opinions at meetings?	❑	❑

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	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
9. What are the PTA/PTO's major activities?		
a. Recruiting new members?	❑	❑
b. Sponsoring school social events?	❑	❑
c. Discussing controversial issues (for example, parents' rights, sex education)?	❑	❑
d. Reviewing the school's academic performance?	❑	❑
10. Does the school reach out to your community?		
a. Does the school work with community groups to provide extra services for families, such as tutoring, rent assistance, or housing?	❑	❑
b. Does the school participate in community events?	❑	❑
c. Have you heard about any partnerships the school has with local businesses?	❑	❑
11. Do your children's teachers work closely with you?		
a. Do teachers tell you how to contact them?	❑	❑
b. Do you hear from your child's teachers at least once a month?	❑	❑
c. Are you notified right away if your child falls behind?	❑	❑
d. Are you involved in solving discipline problems?	❑	❑
e. Do teachers suggest home learning activities for you to use with your child?	❑	❑
12. Does the school provide opportunities for you and your child's teacher to develop a strong partnership?		
a. Does the school sponsor social events for parents and teachers to get to know each other?	❑	❑
b. Have you been notified of workshops on how parents and teachers can work better together?	❑	❑
c. Are you ever invited to school staff meetings?	❑	❑

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	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
13. Does the principal make an effort to know parents and students?		
a. Is the principal friendly and polite to you and other parents?	❑	❑
b. Is the principal available to meet with parents?	❑	❑
c. Does the principal attend most school events?	❑	❑
d. Does the principal know who your child is?	❑	❑
14. Do you feel that parents are involved in how the school is run?		
a. Are parents included in selecting the school principal?	❑	❑
b. Are parents involved in planning and evaluating school programs?	❑	❑
c. Does the school actively seek advice from parents on school issues?	❑	❑
15. Is the school's parent involvement policy clear to you?		
a. Is the policy in writing?	❑	❑
b. Is the policy included in the school handbook?	❑	❑
c. Do you have a copy of the policy?	❑	❑
16. Does the school explain what your child is learning and how he or she is being taught?		
a. Does the school offer materials explaining the curriculum grade by grade?	❑	❑
b. Does the school provide parent orientation about educational programs (Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education, for example)?	❑	❑
c. Do you understand your child's placement?	❑	❑

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	❖ Needs Improvement ❖	
	Families	Educators
17. Does the school fully inform parents about its goals for student achievement?		
a. Have you been informed of the school's goals for student achievement?	❑	❑
b. Were parents involved in setting these goals?	❑	❑
c. Does the school explain whether students are grouped by ability?	❑	❑
18. Do you feel fully informed about your child's academic performance?		
a. Are report card and grades fully explained to you?	❑	❑
b. Do you have an opportunity to discuss how to improve your child's performance privately with teachers?	❑	❑
c. Are results of standardized tests, for your child and the whole class, clearly explained to you?	❑	❑
19. Does the school help you be more effective as parents?		
a. Does the school involve you in planning activities for families?	❑	❑
b. Does the school offer workshops on how to help your child do better in school?	❑	❑
c. Does the school help organize events for parents to get to know each other?	❑	❑
d. Does the school bring in community groups or agencies to provide training on topics of interest to you?	❑	❑
20. Are community services offered through the school?		
a. Does the school offer adult education and high school equivalency (GED) programs?	❑	❑
b. Are social services available through the school (for example, health services, family counseling)?	❑	❑
c. Is the school building available for community activities?	❑	❑

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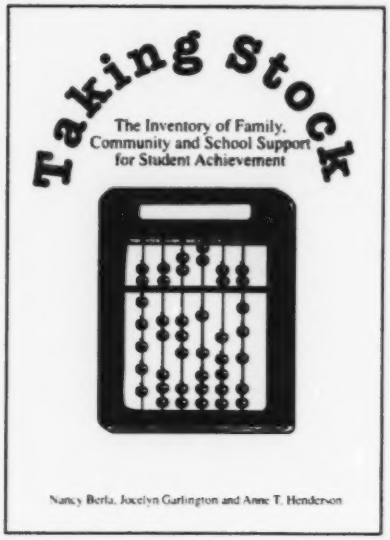
Let's Get Together to Take Stock


Taking Stock
The Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement
Nancy Berla, Jocelyn Garlington and Anne T. Henderson

What is *Taking Stock*?

An Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement, developed by the National Committee for Citizens in Education, *Taking Stock* is designed to help us build a closer partnership between the school, our families, and the community.

Taking Stock will help us learn what parents and families, teachers and community people, the principal and other school staff, think about how we are doing. What is going well? What could be better? *Taking Stock* will also help us to develop an action plan, so that we are all working together to support student achievement.

What's Involved?

The first step is for everyone in the school community to answer a questionnaire. After the results are tallied, we will have a short report that sums up how well we think the school is:

- **Reaching out to Families**
- **Welcoming Families to the School Building**
- **Developing a Strong Relationship Between Families and the School**
- **Helping Parents Understand the School Program**
- **Helping Parents Be More Effective Parents and Community Members**

Then we develop an action plan to make things better.

Who is "We?"

"We" is *all of us*. For the best results, everyone needs to participate. The goal is to have the entire school staff and *at least* 25 percent of all the school's families respond to the questionnaire. We also need volunteers of all kinds to tally the results and fill out the report cards. And a task force representing our whole school community should develop the Action Plan. That way, we all decide together what we need to do.

Please Help Us Get Started

Date and Time: Place:

Questions? Call the school at:

Ask for:

Taking Stock: What's Involved?

Taking Stock IS:

- A systematic way to look at the school's relationship with families that takes in a number of perspectives.
- A tool for self-evaluation -- to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- A practical approach to increase parent involvement, leading to improved achievement for our children.

Taking Stock is NOT:

- An "evaluation" by outsiders, to be used against the school.
- Just another survey.
- A standardized test that is difficult to take and understand.

Goals of Taking Stock

- Present the elements of an effective parent, community, school partnership to improve student achivement
- Enable a school to assess its current efforts to reach out and work with its community
- Provide a user-friendly process to identify areas of strength and weakness
- Recommend how to use the findings to develop an action plan for improvement

For Families:

16. Does the school explain what your child is learning and how he or she is being taught?

For example:

a. Does the school offer materials explaining the curriculum grade by grade? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school provide parent orientation about educational programs (Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education, for example?) ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do you understand your child's placement? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's success in helping you understand the curriculum:
○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor

For Educators:

16. Does the school give parents adequate information about the curriculum?

For example:

a. School offers written materials to explain the curriculum ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Orientation is provided for parents about school's educational programs ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Parents are consulted about child's placement (e.g. Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's information on the curriculum:
○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor

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Taking Stock:Family Report Card

❖ ❖ ❖

School _____

	Grade	FINAL GRADE
Reaching out to Families		
1. Communicating Often and Openly with Families	_____	
2. Reaching All Cultures and Language Groups	_____	
3. Reaching Working & Single Parents	_____	
4. Extra Efforts to Reach All Families	_____	
		_____
Welcoming Families to the School Building		
5. School's Welcome to Families	_____	
6. Open and Available School and Staff	_____	
7. Encouraging Volunteers	_____	
8. Active and Strong PTA/PTO	_____	
9. Major PTA/PTO Activities	_____	
10. Reaching Out to the Community	_____	
		_____
Developing Strong Relationships		
11. Teachers Communicate with Parents	_____	
12. Parent-Teacher Partnership	_____	
13. Parent-Principal Relationship	_____	
14. Parents Involved in Decision-Making	_____	
15. School's Parent Involvement Policy	_____	
		_____
Helping Parents Understand the Curriculum		
16. Information about the Curriculum	_____	
17. Goals for Student Achievement	_____	
18. Information on Student Performance	_____	
		_____
Helping Parents Be More Effective		
19. School Supports Parents	_____	
20. School Connects to Community Services	_____	
		_____

A 3.2 - 4.0 *Great job. Keep up the good work!*
B 2.6 - 3.1 *Good work. A little more will put you on top!*
C 2.0 - 2.5 *Solid beginning. Time for some next steps!*
U 1.0 - 1.9 *Needs improvement. Let's get to work!*

Taking Stock / for Families

The Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement

****

Dear Parents and Family Members:

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to answer these questions about your school's efforts to work with families. Research shows that involving parents helps children do better in school.

Your answers will help the school learn more about your dreams and expectations for your children. With your help, the school can plan a parent involvement program that meets your needs and contributes to your child's success.

We greatly value your responses.

****

1. Name of School: _____

2. Date: _____

3. Please let us know who you are:

   - ❑ Parent
   - ❑ Grandparent or Relative
   - ❑ Friend

All responses will be kept confidential

1. Does the school communicate often and openly with you?

For example:

a. Does the school keep you informed about important dates, activities, and events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are communications from the school easy to understand? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school handbook provide useful information for parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Has the school encouraged you to review your child's records? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Overall, rate the school's communications with parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

2. Does the school respect and respond to its community's cultural and language differences?

For example:

a. Are report cards and newsletters available in a language you understand? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school reception staff communicate well with you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Is information about school events available in your neighborhood, such as at local churches and over the radio? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's response to its community:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

3. If you are a single or working parent, do you feel the school makes a special effort to reach you?

For example:

a. Are meetings and events held evenings and/or weekends to fit your schedule? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Is child care provided during meetings and at other school events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school make efforts to reach you at work or in the evening? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's efforts to reach out to single and working parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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4. Does the school make extra efforts to reach all families?

For example:

a. Have you been invited to school gatherings at places in the community, such as local churches or community centers? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are special efforts made to involve fathers and other men important to your children? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Have you ever been asked for advice or help in reaching other parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Have you been introduced to a school staff person whose job is getting to know your community? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's extra efforts to reach families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

5. Does the school welcome you into the building and make you feel comfortable?

For example:

a. Are directions clearly posted to help you find your way around? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school have a parent room or center? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Is the office waiting area comfortable? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Is the office staff friendly and helpful? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's welcome to families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

6. Are the school and its staff open and available to you?

For example:

a. Are you welcome in the building any time during the school day? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school return your calls within 24 hours? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. May you easily visit or observe the classroom? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's openness to you:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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7. Does the school encourage your volunteer participation?

For example:

a. Are there interesting volunteer opportunities you can do at school or at home? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Have you been encouraged to volunteer? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school appreciate your volunteer efforts? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's volunteer program:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

8. Is the parent-teacher organization (PTA/PTO) active and strong?

For example:

a. Does the PTA/PTO meet at least four times a year? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Do you enjoy attending the meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do your child's teachers attend the meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Do parents elect PTA/PTO officers? ❑ Yes ❑ No

e. Are you given time to express your opinions at meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's PTA/PTO:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

9. What are the PTA/PTO's major activities?

For example:

a. Recruiting new members? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Sponsoring school social events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Discussing controversial issues (for example, parents' rights, sex education)? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Reviewing the school's academic performance? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the PTA/PTO's activities:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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10. Does the school reach out to your community?

For example:

a. Does the school work with community groups to provide extra services for families, such as tutoring, rent assistance, or housing? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school participate in community events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Have you heard about any partnerships the school has with local businesses? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's outreach to the community:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

11. Do your children's teachers work closely with you?

For example:

a. Do teachers tell you how to contact them? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Do you hear from your child's teachers at least once a month? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Are you notified right away if your child falls behind? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Are you involved in solving discipline problems? ❑ Yes ❑ No

e. Do teachers suggest home learning activities for you to use with your child? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the teachers' efforts to communicate with parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

12. Does the school provide opportunities for you and your child's teacher to develop a strong partnership?

For example:

a. Does the school sponsor social events for parents and teachers to get to know each other? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Have you been notified of workshops on how parents and teachers can work better together? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Are you ever invited to school staff meetings? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's parent-teacher partnership opportunities:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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13. Does the principal make an effort to know parents and students?

For example:

a. Is the principal friendly and polite to you and other parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Is the principal available to meet with parents? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the principal attend most school events? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Does the principal know who your child is? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the principal's availability:
○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor

14. Do you feel that parents are involved in decision-making at the school?

For example:

a. Are parents included in selecting the school principal? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are parents involved in planning and evaluating school programs? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school actively seek advice from parents on school issues? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate parent involvement in decision-making:
○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor

15. Is the school's parent involvement policy clear to you?

For example:

a. Is the policy in writing? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Is the policy included in the school handbook? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do you have a copy of the policy? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's parent involvement policy:
○ Excellent ○ Good ○ Fair ○ Poor

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16. Does the school explain what your child is learning and how he or she is being taught?

For example:

a. Does the school offer materials explaining the curriculum grade by grade? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school provide parent orientation about educational programs (Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education, for example)? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Do you understand your child's placement? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's success in helping you understand the curriculum:
O Excellent O Good O Fair O Poor

17. Does the school fully inform parents about its goals for student achievement?

For example:

a. Have you been informed of the school's goals for student achievement? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Were parents involved in setting these goals? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school explain whether students are grouped by ability? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate how well the school communicates its goals:
O Excellent O Good O Fair O Poor

18. Do you feel fully informed about your child's academic performance?

For example:

a. Are report card and grades fully explained to you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Do you have an opportunity to discuss how to improve your child's performance privately with teachers? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Are results of standardized tests, for your child and the whole class, clearly explained to you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate how well the school keeps you informed about your child's performance:
O Excellent O Good O Fair O Poor

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19. Does the school help you be more effective as parents?

For example:

a. Does the school involve you in planning activities for families? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Does the school offer workshops on how you can help your child do better in school? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Does the school help organize events for parents to get to know each other? ❑ Yes ❑ No

d. Does the school bring in community groups or agencies to provide training on topics of interest to you? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's performance in supporting you as a parent:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

20. Are community services offered through the school?

For example:

a. Does the school offer adult education and high school equivalency (GED) programs? ❑ Yes ❑ No

b. Are social services available through the school (for example, health services, family counseling)? ❑ Yes ❑ No

c. Is the school building available for community activities? ❑ Yes ❑ No

Rate the school's community services:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

P.S. Please make sure that you have checked "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," or "Poor" for every question. Thank you.

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TAKING STOCK

The Last Word / For Families

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to our questionnaire. We are also interested in hearing what YOU would like to say about involving families in your school.

1. What is the school doing that is most helpful to you as a parent?

2. Please tell us about what you WISH the school would do to make things easier for you and your child.

3. What do you think would be the best ways for parents at your school to become more involved?

4. Do you feel welcome and comfortable in the school? Why?

TAKING STOCK is a user-friendly process for looking at how the school is working with its families and community, and how they can work together better to support student success. TAKING STOCK is a project of the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE). Copyright 1993 National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Taking Stock / for Educators

The Inventory of Family, Community and School Support for Student Achievement

****

Dear Educators:

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to answer these questions about your school's efforts to work with parents. Research shows that involving parents helps children do better in school.

Asking all parts of the school community -- teachers, families, administrators, and staff -- about what the school is doing, and how effective it has been, will help us plan a program that meets everyone's needs and contributes to the children's success in school.

We appreciate all that you are already doing and greatly value your responses.

******

1. Name of School: _____

2. Date: _____

3. Please let us know who you are:

   - ❑ Teacher
   - ❑ Administrator
   - ❑ Other Staff _____

All responses will be kept confidential

1. Does the school communicate openly and frequently with families?

For example:

a. Calendar of school events, holidays, and in-service days is sent to each family. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School communications are easy for parents to understand. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School handbook contains information specifically for parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Parents are encouraged to review their child's school records. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's communications:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

2. Does the school make special efforts to reach families from all racial, cultural and language groups in your community?

For example:

a. Report cards, school handbook, newsletter, and notices are available in languages other than English. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School reception staff can communicate well with all parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School newsletters, notices are sent to local churches, community meeting-places, local radio and TV stations that serve various cultural groups. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's efforts to reach all families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

3. Does the school make special efforts to reach working and single parents?

For example:

a. Meetings and events are held evenings and/or weekends to accommodate working parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Child care is provided during meeting times and other school events. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Efforts are made to reach parents at work or in the evening. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's efforts to reach working and single parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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4. Does the school make extra efforts to reach families who are not as involved?

For example:

a. School holds meetings at local churches, community centers, etc. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Special efforts are made to involve fathers and other men who are important to students. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Consultations are held with parents on how to reach other parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. School staff person is responsible for getting to know the parent community. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's extra efforts to reach parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

5. Does the school welcome parents and family members into the building and make them feel comfortable?

For example:

a. Posted signs warmly welcome families and provide directions. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School has a parent room or center. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School has comfortable waiting area for parents and visitors. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Office staff is friendly and helpful. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's welcome to families:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

6. Are the school and its staff open and available to parents?

For example:

a. Parents and visitors are welcome any time during school day. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Telephone calls from parents are returned within 24 hours. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents may easily visit and observe the classrooms. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's openness and availability:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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7. Does the school encourage volunteer participation from families?

For example:

a. Wide range of volunteer opportunities offered at home and school. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School actively recruits family members. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School supports and rewards volunteers. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's volunteer program:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

8. Is the parent-teacher organization (PTA/PTO) active and strong?

For example:

a. PTA/PTO meets at least 4 times a year. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. At least 20% of families attend. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School staff regularly attends meetings. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Officers are elected by PTA/PTO members. Yes ❑ No ❑

e. Parents speak freely at the meetings. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's PTA/PTO:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

9. What are the PTA/PTO's major activities?

For example:

a. Recruiting least involved families. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Sponsoring school social events. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Discussing controversial issues (e.g. parent rights, sex education). Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Reviewing the school's academic performance. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the PTA/PTO's activities:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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10. Does the school reach out to the community?

For example:

a. School collaborates with community groups to provide extra services to students and families. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School participates in community events. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Partnerships are established with local business(es). Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's outreach to the community:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

11. Do teachers communicate well with parents?

For example:

a. Teachers inform parents how to reach them. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Teachers communicate at least once a month with each family. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents are notified right away when a student falls behind. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Parents are involved in resolving disciplinary problems. Yes ❑ No ❑

e. Teachers suggest home learning activities to help parents work with children. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the teachers' efforts to communicate with parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

12. Does the school provide opportunities for parents and teachers to develop a strong partnership?

For example:

a. School sponsors social events for parents and teachers. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Workshops are given for teachers and parents on how to work together. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents are invited to staff meetings. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's parent/teacher partnership efforts:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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13. Do parents have opportunities to develop a relationship with the principal?

For example:

a. Principal is friendly and gracious to parents and visitors. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Principal is available for meetings at parent request. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Principal attends most school events, including the social ones. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. Principal gets to know most students. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the principal's accessibility to parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

14. Are parents involved in decision making at the school?

For example:

a. Parents participate in selecting the school principal. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Parents are involved in planning and evaluating school programs. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School actively seeks advice from parents on school issues. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate parent involvement in decision-making:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

15. Does the school have a clear policy on parent involvement?

For example:

a. School has a written policy on parent involvement. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Policy is included in the school handbook. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Policy is distributed to all families. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate school's parent involvement policy:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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16. Does the school give parents adequate information about the curriculum?

For example:

a. School offers written materials to explain the curriculum grade by grade. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Orientation is provided for parents about school's educational programs. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Parents are consulted about child's placement (e.g. Chapter 1, special education, bilingual education). Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's information on the curriculum:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

17. Does the school fully inform all parents about its goals for student achievement?

For example:

a. School presents to parents its goals for student achievement. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Parents are involved in setting these goals. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. If the school groups students by ability, this system is clearly explained to parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate how well the school communicates its goals:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

18. Are parents fully informed about student academic performance?

For example:

a. Report card and grades are clearly explained to parents. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. Parents have opportunity to discuss how to improve their children's performance. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. Results of school-wide performance on standardized tests are clearly interpreted for parents each year. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's information on student performance:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

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19. Does the school help parents be more effective as parents?

For example:

a. Parents are involved in planning school activities for families. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School offers workshops on how parents can help students do better in school. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School organizes social events for parents to get to know one another. Yes ❑ No ❑

d. School arranges for community groups or agencies to provide training on topics of parent interest. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's support for parents:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

20. Does the school help families connect with community services?

For example:

a. School offers adult education and high school equivalency (GED) programs. Yes ❑ No ❑

b. School makes referrals to family support resources and other social services. Yes ❑ No ❑

c. School building is available for community activities. Yes ❑ No ❑

Rate the school's connections to community services:
○ ***Excellent*** ○ ***Good*** ○ ***Fair*** ○ ***Poor***

P.S. Please make sure that you have checked "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," or "Poor" for <u>every</u> question. Thank you.

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TAKING STOCK

The Last Word / For Educators

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to our questionnaire. We are also interested in hearing what YOU have to say about involving families in your school.

1. What do you think would be the best ways to involve parents in improving student achievement at the school?

2. What do you think needs to change for parents at your school to become more involved?

3. What kind of support would you need from the school to be better connected with your students' families?

4. Do you perceive that parents feel welcomed and comfortable at your school? Why?

TAKING STOCK is a user-friendly process for looking at how the school is working with its families and community, and how they can work together better to support student success. TAKING STOCK is a program of the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE). Copyright 1993 National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Haciendo un Balance / Para Familias

Inventario del Apoyo de la Familia, la Comunidad y la Escuela para el Éxito Académico de los Estudiantes

****

Estimados padres:

Gracias por dedicar parte de su tiempo para contestar este cuestionario sobre los esfuerzos que la escuela hace para trabajar con ustedes. Estudios hechos han demostrado que a los niños les va mejor en la escuela cuando sus padres participan en su educación.

Sus respuestas ayudarán a la escuela a conocer mejor sus necesidades, anhelos y las aspiraciones que usted tiene para sus hijos. Con su ayuda, la escuela puede preparar un programa de participación de padres que responda a sus necesidades y que contribuya al triunfo de sus hijos.

Sus respuestas son de gran valor para nosotros.

****

1. Nombre de la escuela: _____
2. Fecha: _____
3. Cuál es su relación con el estudiante que asiste a esta escuela:

   ❑ padre / madre

   ❑ abuelo / abuela / otro familiar

   ❑ amigo / amiga

Sus respuestas son confidenciales

1. ¿Se comunica la escuela con usted a menudo y de manera franca?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le mantiene la escuela informado de las fechas, actividades y eventos importantes? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Son fáciles de entender los comunicados de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Provee el manual de la escuela información útil para los padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿Le ha motivado la escuela para que revise los expedientes de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

En general, califique la comunicación de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

2. ¿Respeta y responde la escuela a las diferencias culturales y de idioma en su comunidad?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Están disponibles en español las tarjetas de calificaciones y los boletines de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se comunican bien los empleados de la oficina con usted? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Se ofrece en su vecindario, la iglesia o por la radio información acerca de los eventos de la escuela? ❑Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo que la escuela hace para alcanzar a todas las familias:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

3. Sí usted es un padre o una madre que trabaja o encabeza su hogar solo(a), ¿cree que la escuela se esfuerza por comunicarse con usted?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se llevan a cabo las reuniones y otros eventos de la escuela por la noche o los fines de semana para permitir su participación? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se ofrece cuidado de niños durante las reuniones u otras actividades de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Se esfuerza la escuela por comunicarse con usted a una hora conveniente? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo que hace la escuela para comunicarse con familias donde ambos padres trabajan o donde sólo hay un padre:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

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4. ¿Hace la escuela un esfuerzo por estar en contacto con todas las familias?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le han invitado a reuniones de la escuela en otros lugares de su comunidad, como iglesias locales o centros comunales? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Hace la escuela esfuerzos especiales para incluir a los papás u otros hombres importantes en la vida de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Le han pedido a usted consejos o ayuda para hacer contacto con otros padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Le han presentado a usted a alguien de la escuela cuyo trabajo es mejorar los lazos con la comunidad? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo adicional de la escuela para alcanzar a todas las familias:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

5. ¿Se siente usted bienvenido y lo hacen sentirse cómodo en la escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Hay señales claras que le ayudan a orientarse dentro de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Tiene la escuela un salón o centro para padres de familia? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Es cómoda el área de espera de la oficina? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Son los empleados de la oficina amables y serviciales? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el esfuerzo que hace la escuela para que los padres se sientan bienvenidos y apreciados:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

6. ¿Se siente usted bien recibido en la escuela y están los empleados dispuestos a ayudarle?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Permite la escuela su visita a cualquier hora del día? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Contesta la escuela sus recados sin atrasos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿ Le facilita la escuela visitar u observar en el aula de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique la atención que usted recibe de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

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7. ¿Le motiva a usted la escuela para que preste servicios voluntarios?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Hay oportunidades interesantes para ayudar en la escuela o desde su casa? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Le han pedido a usted prestar servicio voluntario? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Agradece la escuela sus esfuerzos voluntarios? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el programa voluntario de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

8. ¿Qué tan activo es el grupo de padres (PTA/PTO) de su escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se reúne el grupo por lo menos cuatro veces al año? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Le gusta a usted ir a las reuniones? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Asísten a estas reuniones los maestros de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿Eligen los padres de familia la directiva del grupo? ❑ Sí ❑ No

e. ¿Tiene usted oportunidad en las reuniones de expresar sus opiniones e ideas? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el grupo de padres (PTA/PTO):
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

9. ¿Cuáles son las principales actividades del grupo de padres (PTA/PTO)?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Atraer miembros nuevos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Patrocinar eventos sociales para la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Discutir temas controversiales; por ejemplo, derechos de los padres y educación sexual? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Revisar los resultados académicos de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique las actividades del grupo de padres (PTA/PTO):
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

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10. ¿Está su escuela en contacto con la comunidad?

Por ejemplo:

a. Trabaja la escuela con grupos de la comunidad para ofrecer servicios adicionales a las familias, tales como tutoría o asistencia para vivienda? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Participa la escuela en eventos de la comunidad? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Sabe usted de proyectos de colaboración entre la escuela y negocios locales? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique cómo son las relaciones de la escuela con la comunidad:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

11. ¿Trabajan los maestros de sus hijos en estrecha colaboración con usted?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le dicen los maestros cómo comunicarse con ellos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se comunican con usted los maestros de sus hijos por lo menos una vez al mes? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Le avisa la escuela inmediatamente si sus hijos se atrasan en los estudios? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿Ayuda usted a resolver los problemas de disciplina de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

e. ¿Sugieren los maestros actividades de aprendizaje para que usted las use en la casa con sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique los esfuerzos de los maestros:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenos*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

12. ¿Ofrece la escuela oportunidades para que usted desarrolle una relación estrecha con los maestros de sus hijos?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Patrocina la escuela actividades sociales para que los padres de familia y los maestros se conozcan mejor? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Le han avisado a usted de talleres de entrenamiento que se llevan a cabo para conocer formas en que los padres pueden trabajar mejor con los maestros? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Ha sido usted invitado a reuniones del personal de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique las oportunidades que la escuela ofrece para que usted desarrolle una relación estrecha con ella:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

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13. ¿Hace el director (principal) un esfuerzo por llegar a conocer a los padres y a los estudiantes?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Es el director amistoso y amable con usted y otros padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Está el director a la dispocisión para reunirse con los padres? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Participa el director en la mayoría de las actividades de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Conoce el director a sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique la disponibilidad del director:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

14. ¿Cree usted que los padres participan en la toma de decisiones de la escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Participan los padres en la selección del director? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Participan los padres en actividades para diseñar y evaluar programas para la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Busca la escuela activamente sugerencias de los padres sobre asuntos relacionados con la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique la participación de los padres en la toma de decisiones de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***buena*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

15. ¿Está clara para usted la política de la escuela en cuanto a la participación de los padres?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Tiene la escuela esta política por escrito? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Están estas políticas incluídas en el manual de la escuela? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Tiene usted una copia de estas políticas? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique las políticas de la escuela sobre la participación de los padres:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenas*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

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16. ¿Le explica a usted la escuela lo que sus hijos estudian y cómo se les está enseñando?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Ofrece la escuela materiales que explican el plan de estudio para cada grado? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Ofrece la escuela información sobre los diferentes programas educativos, por ejemplo, educación especial, *Capítulo 1*, educación bilingüe? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Entiende usted la ubicación académica de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el éxito de la escuela en ayudarle a entender el plan de estudio:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

17. ¿Ofrece la escuela suficiente información sobre sus metas para el logro académico de sus estudiantes?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se le ha informado a usted sobre las metas de la escuela para el logro académico de los estudiantes? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Participaron los padres de familia en establecer estas metas? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Revisa la escuela estas metas con los padres todos los años? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique que tan bien la escuela da a conocer sus metas académicas:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bien*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

18. ¿Se siente usted bien informado sobre el rendimiento académico de sus hijos?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Se asegura la escuela de que usted entienda las tarjetas de calificaciones y las notas de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se le da a usted la oportunidad de hablar en privado con los maestros sobre cómo mejorar el rendimiento escolar de sus hijos? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Explica la escuela, con claridad, los resultados de las pruebas estandarizadas de sus hijos y de la clase en general? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique que tan bien la escuela le mantiene informado sobre el rendimiento escolar de sus hijos:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bien*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

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19. ¿Le ofrece la escuela apoyo como padre de familia?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Le ofrece la escuela la oportunidad de planear actividades para la familia? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Ofrece la escuela talleres de entrenamiento en cómo ayudar a sus hijos con los estudios? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Ayuda la escuela a organizar actividades para que los padres se conozcan mejor entre sí? ❑ Sí ❑ No

d. ¿ Usa la escuela a otros grupos o agencias de la comunidad para ofrecerle información sobre temas de su interés? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique el apoyo que usted como padre recibe de la escuela:
○ ***excelente*** ○ ***bueno*** ○ ***regular*** ○ ***deficiente***

20. ¿Se ofrecen servicios comunitarios a través de la escuela?

Por ejemplo:

a. ¿Existen en la escuela programas de educación para adultos y de equivalencia de estudios secundarios (GED)? ❑ Sí ❑ No

b. ¿Se ofrecen servicios sociales a través de la escuela; por ejemplo, servicios de salud y consejería familiar? ❑ Sí ❑ No

c. ¿Presta la escuela sus instalaciones para actividades de la comunidad? ❑ Sí ❑ No

Califique los servicios comunitarios que ofrece la escuela:
○ ***excelentes*** ○ ***buenos*** ○ ***regulares*** ○ ***deficientes***

P.S. Por favor asegúrese de haber marcado en cada pregunta la sección de "excelente", "bueno", "regular" o " deficiente". Gracias.

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HACIENDO UN BALANCE

Preguntas Abiertas / Para Familias

Queremos agradecerle mucho el tiempo que usted dedicó para responder este cuestionario. También estamos interesados en saber lo que a usted le gustaría decir acerca de la participación de las familias en su escuela.

1. ¿Qué es lo más útil que la escuela está haciendo para ayudarle a usted como padre de familia?

2. Por favor, díganos lo que usted DESEA que la escuela haga para que las cosas sean más fáciles para usted y su hijo.

3. ¿Cuál cree usted que sería la mejor forma para que los padres de familia en su escuela participen más?

4. ¿Se siente usted bienvenido y cómodo en la escuela? ¿Por qué?

HACIENDO UN BALANCE es un procedimiento fácil de usar para hacer un inventario de cómo trabaja la escuela con las familias y la comunidad, y cómo pueden trabajar mejor para ayudar a los estudiantes a triunfar. HACIENDO UN BALANCE, es un proyecto del Comité Nacional para Ciudadanos en la Educación. Copyright 1993 National Committee for Citizens in Education.